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A WANDERER'S VOICE.

BY L. C. M.

Soon, ah, too soon, dear love, I shall be gone,
And this bright sun will shine for me in vain,
This happy, happy, sun that shines for me—
That mocking shines above our parting pain.

Yet sometimes, in the tender twilight time,
Wilt thou not be aware of me—a shade—
A memory that enters with the dusk,
A waiting ghost that will not be gainsaid?

And thou wilt say—"She came and she has fled—
How strange our meeting was—how brief our day!"
Thou lovest much when I am by thy side;
Will love be dead when I am far away?

For thee will grow the laurel leaf of fame—
For thee thy home, thy children's laughing play—
Such things as men hold dear thy days will crown,
Leaving no lack when I am far away?

Thou wilt recall the past perchance with tears,
And feel old kisses touch thy lips once more,
And fingers tremble in thy clasping hold—
Then lights will come and all be as before.

I would not cause thee pain I might not soothe—
When I am gone be happy and forget;
But if some touch of memory thrill thy heart,
Say once—"God bless my love, who loves me yet."

OUT OF THE NIGHT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "FROM GLOOM TO SUNLIGHT," "LORD LYNNE'S CHOICE," "HER MOTHER'S SIN," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER LV.—(CONTINUED.)

THEN for some minutes there was silence. Lady Linleigh was the first to break it.

"Do you know how I shall try to reward you, Earle?" she asked.

"I think less of the reward than of the kindness that prompts it," he replied, gratefully.

"I shall do my best to further your interests in life—to help you to reach such a position as shall please Doris. I will hasten your marriage by every means in my power, and I will love you as though you were my own son. Do not look so grateful; they will wonder what I am saying to you. You understand, once and for all, I shall never allude to this again."

The next moment Lady Doris was laughingly accusing the countess of having asked her to sing, in order that she might talk at her ease.

"We are quite a family party," said Lord Linleigh. "Earle, do you play billiards?"

"No," he replied, "I do not."

"Then come at once, and let me give you your first lesson. No man can hope to succeed in this world who cannot play billiards."

Doris went into the billiard room to see the first lesson given and received, while Lady Estelle pondered over the same problem—did Doris love Earle, or did she not?

On the morning following the earl and the poet had a long conversation. It was a fine spring day, with the odor of early violets and the song of the birds in the air.

"Come out with me, Mr. Moray," said the earl; "we can talk more at our ease under the broad blue sky."

Then, as they walked through the stately domain, the earl talked more seriously than he had ever done before.

"Some men," he said, "might object to seeing an engagement of the kind fulfilled. I do not. When Doris, as you know, had no name, no home, you would have been proud to make her your wife; she, in turn, should be, and is, I do not doubt, proud to reward your love.

"Now, it would be very easy for me, Earle, to imitate one of the fathers in heavy comedy, and say, 'Take her—be happy; here are fifty thousand pounds and my blessing.' I repeat, that would be easy, but it would be an injustice to you. I prefer that you shall make a position for yourself, and win her; you will be happier."

"Yes," replied Earle, "a thousand times happier. I love her so dearly—pardon me, my lord—so dearly, that I would work, as Jacob did, seven years to win her; and, because of my great love, they would seem as one day."

"I will take your fortunes in hand," said the earl, "as I told you before. It would be easy to give you one; but I will give you what is far better—the means of making one. I will place you in such a position that it shall not be in the power of any person to say, when he hears of my daughter's marriage, that she had made a mesalliance."

"Thank you, my lord; my deeds, my life shall thank you," said Earle, earnestly.

"You have already," continued the earl, "made for yourself some reputation as a poet; now tell me, have you ever turned your attention to politics?"

The young poet's face glowed again; it was so sweet to him, for her dear sake, this high hope of fame.

"I have studied the leading topics of the day," he replied, modestly.

"I know you have the gift of eloquence, and my first effort on your behalf shall be that you be returned a member for Anderley. The late member died a few weeks since, and I am repeatedly asked to put forward a candidate. You shall be that candidate, Earle Moray, and you shall succeed. When you are M. P. for Anderley, we will talk of the next step."

"I can not thank you," said Earle, breathlessly, "it would be quite useless for me to try."

"In the meantime there is an appointment in London, in the civil service, vacant, and I think my influence can procure it for you. It will bring you in an income of seven or eight hundred pounds per annum. The expenses of the election will of course be mine."

Earle raised his hand to his head with a bewildered expression.

"I think," he said, "I must have had a fairy god-mother."

"Genius is a fairy godmother," said the earl, laughingly. "We shall all be very happy, Earle. Doris is young—too young to marry yet; a year or two in the great world will not hurt her. I do not think anything will ever take her from you, Earle."

"I am sure of it, my lord. I have full faith in my love."

That very evening Lord Linleigh wrote to London, to secure the appointment of which he had spoken.

It was characteristic of him that more than once during the course of that letter-writing he laughed at himself for being sentimental.

"I should have done better," he thought, "to have given the young man something handsome, and have let Doris marry as my daughter ought to marry."

Then again he would reproach himself with the thought, and his heart would warm with the consciousness of doing a good and generous action.

It would have been impossible, even had he desired it, to have kept the household in ignorance over Earle.

He had not been there twenty-four hours before the whole body of domestics were interested in his wooing. He was universally admired.

The susceptible portion of the establishment declared that he was as handsome as Apollo, with a voice like real music, while languid footmen and knowing grooms declared him to be the "right kind of a gentleman."

The Lady Doris had said little, but she had watched him with jealous eyes. If he had failed in any little observance of form or etiquette, she would never have pardoned him; if she had heard even the least hint that he was not perfectly well bred, that he was not accustomed to the manners of good society, her angry resentment would have known no bounds.

As it was, she was flattered by the universal praise and admiration. Earle might have lived with dukes and earls all his life. It never occurred to him, this terrible distance in rank; he did not think of it. As he once said to Doris, "He was a gentleman; a king was no more."

She had half anticipated feeling ashamed of him. She found, on the contrary, that she had ample reason to be proud of him.

The earl told his wife and daughter what he hoped and intended to do for Earle. He almost wondered that the countess should be so pleased; her face flushed and her eyes filled with tears.

"You are very good, Uiria," she said, very gently.

He fancied it was for her daughter's sake that she felt pleased. But there were no tears in his daughter's beautiful eyes.

"I am a deal of trouble to you, papa," she said. "It is not enough that you must have a grown-up daughter, but you must also provide her with a husband! It is rather too hard on you."

"But, Doris, you—you love Earle?" he said, anxiously.

"Oh, yes, I love Earle. It is a thousand pities, though, that he has not a ready-made fortune and position—it would save you so much trouble."

"My dear Doris, there can be no trouble for me where you are concerned; you know how anxious I am that you should be happy. You will be happy with Earle?"

"I am one of those singularly fortunate people, papa, who are happy anywhere," she replied.

Then, seeing a very discontented expression on his face, she hastened to add: "Remember how often you have called me a true Studleigh, papa. I find it more in my nature to laugh than to sentimentalise: indeed, under pain of instant execution, I fear that I should not, could not grow sentimental. At the same time, believe me no one could be more grateful than I am to you about Earle."

And with that the earl was forced to be content. She sat down to the piano shortly afterward, and he heard the gay voice singing of love and flowers. He looked at her—the same puzzle came to him.

"Has she any heart?" he asked himself. That was a question which no one yet had been able to answer.

"Earle," said Lady Doris, as they sat together in the morning room, "do not read any more to me. I always tell you that reading poetry aloud to me is a waste of time and of talent. I want you to talk."

The next moment he had closed the book, and was sitting on the little ottoman at her feet.

"I am only too delighted," he said, "it is not often that my beautiful queen wishes to talk to me."

"Your beautiful queen wishes to know, Earle, what you think of my lady?"

"My lady!" he repeated, wonderingly.

"Yes; try and not be dull of understanding—nothing tires me so severely as that. My lady! I mean, of course, the Countess of Linleigh. What do you think of her, Earle?"

"I think she is very kind, very beautiful, very stately, and very charming."

"I agree with you; but do you not think that she is rather sentimental?"

"I hardly know. Why, Doris?"

"She has a fashion of dropping into my dressing room at all hours, of taking this long hair of mine into her hands, and looking as though she would fain kiss it, of kissing my face, and talking about you."

"That seems very natural, Doris, and very kind," he said.

"When she talks about you, Earle, the tears come into her eyes, and she is so eloquent about love. Do you know what I fancy sometimes?"

"No," he replied, "I do not."

"You need not look so strangely at me; but I do fancy at times that when she was young, perhaps she loved some one like me, who is dead. What do you think, Earle?"

"It is very possible, darling. I should be so kind to her, Doris, in your place."

"I am kind. I never interfere; I let her do just as she likes with me. I am sure, Earle, it is not possible to be any kinder than that."

CHAPTER LVI.

THE appointment was secured. It was hardly probable that the Earl of Linleigh should ask anything from the government and be refused.

He was the rising man of the day, and the government was anxious for his support. He had great influence, and it was all needed.

When, therefore, he made a special application for this choice bit of patronage, it was agreed on all sides that it would be most unwise to refuse it.

Earle was made perfectly happy. The income of eight hundred pounds a year did not seem such a great or wonderful thing to him as the fact that he was a public man, that his footing was firmly established, and that every day brought him nearer to Doris.

In his simplicity, he often wondered how it was that little paragraphs continually appeared in the leading papers of the day about him.

One time it was to the effect that it was not generally known that Earle Moray, Esq., recently appointed to the Royal Commission Service, was the poet with whose last work all England was delighted. Again, that Earle Moray, Esq., the poet, intended to contest the borough of Anderley.

He found himself continually mentioned as one of the leading men of the day, one to whom the eyes of the country turned with hope. Earle could not imagine how it was, and in his perplexity he spoke of it to Lord Linleigh.

"If I did not know that it was impossible," he said, "I should imagine some one was always sending little paragraphs to the newspapers about me."

"It is the price of celebrity," said the earl. "A man who wishes to advance with the public must always keep himself before the public eye.

"You would be surprised how famous these little paragraphs, as you call them, have made you already. People often ask me about Earle Moray. You will have a

greater name than this some day, and you will wonder how you have acquired it."

In the meantime he was quite happy. He was not to commence his engagement until the middle of April, and the earl insisted upon it that he should continued at Linleigh Court.

"Lessons in social life are as needful as any others," said Lord Linleigh. "You cannot do better for the next few weeks than spend as much time as possible with Lady Estelle. I will introduce you to the chief magnates of the county; and so you will be acquiring knowledge of one kind, if not of another."

The next great event was a visit from the Duke and Duchess of Downsbury to Linleigh Court. The duke had long desired to go, but the duchess, prouder than himself, constantly refused.

At last curiosity prevailed. Lord Linleigh wrote such glowing accounts of his happiness, and such descriptions of the beauty of his daughter and the happiness of his wife, that it was not in human nature to keep away any longer.

Then, indeed, was Lady Doris puzzled. The countess seemed to have one anxiety; it was not for herself at all, but for Lord Linleigh's daughter—that she should look beautiful, that they should admire her, that she should make the most favorable impression on them, seemed to be her sole desire.

The young beauty was highly amused at it. They were talking one morning, and Lady Estelle held a long, shining tress of Doris' hair in her hand.

"I hope," she said, suddenly, "the duchess will admire your hair, Doris."

"Do you, Lady Linleigh?" was the reply, with a little raising of the eyebrows. "I am not very anxious about it myself."

"My darling," said the countess, impulsively, "do not say that. I want my mother to admire and to like, even to love, you.

"It is very kind of you, Lady Linleigh, but it is very improbable. I fancy that I remember her grace. She is very tall and stately, is she not? with a proud, high-bred face, not handsome at all, but very aristocratic?"

"Yes," said Lady Estelle, faintly; "that is she."

"Then I am quite sure, dear Lady Linleigh, she will not like me. I must have been quite a child when you paid that memorable visit to Brackenside, but I remember her much better than I remember you, and I am quite sure that she looked as though she would like to shake me."

"But, Doris," said the countess, earnestly, "you must try to make the duchess like you. You will try, will you not, my dear?"

"Will you tell me why, Lady Linleigh?" asked the young girl.

The countess grew pale and excited.

"Do it to please me, my darling, because I want her to like you—do it for my sake. Will you, Doris?"

The girl laughed—a low, rippling laugh, that had no music in it.

"I will do anything, Lady Linleigh—anything to please you; but, if my own mother were living, provided that I loved her myself, I should not be very anxious for any one else to love her."

Lady Estelle drew back with something like repulsion in her face.

"You are mistaken; you can not judge. It is only natural that we wish every one to love and admire what we love ourselves."

Doris looked at her with laughing eyes.

"I can not see it. I should like every one, for instance, to admire Earle, but I do not care about any one loving him."

Lady Linleigh sat in silence for some minutes, then looking up, she said:

"We will not argue over it, my dear child; but you will promise to be very nice to the duchess, and try to win her liking?"

"Certainly, I promise, Lady Linleigh. Tell me, is the duchess a lady of great importance?"

"Yes, she is, indeed; she has much influence at court and in society."

"Then I will do all I can, not only to make her like me, but to make her speak favorably of me. Shall you be pleased, then, dear Lady Linleigh?"

Yes, she would be pleased; but she owned to herself, with a deep sigh, that it was impossible to arouse any deep or true feeling, any noble sentiment, any generous idea, in the girl's mind.

Appeal to her vanity, her interest, her ambition, you were sure to find some answering chord. Appeal to anything else was utterly in vain.

Lady Doris laughed to herself as the countess, with something like disappointment in her face, quitted the room.

"I have heard the proverb, 'Love me, love my dog,'" she said to herself. "I never heard 'Love me, love my mother.'"

Still, the fact that the coming visitor was a duchess, and a person of very great importance, the wife of one of the wealthiest dukes in England was not without its influence on her; she resolved, therefore, to be most charming and gracious.

She was secretly amused at Lady Linleigh's anxiety over her dress. On the day when their visitors were expected, she said to her:

"Take great pains with your toilet, this evening, Doris—wear that set of pearls and rubies."

"If the duke were a widower," laughed Lady Doris to herself, "I should feel sure the countess wanted me to make a conquest."

She was awed and impressed in spite of herself, when she stood before the Duchess of Downsbury. The duke she remembered well; she felt no especial awe of him; she could tell from the expression of his face that he thought her beautiful.

She was accustomed by this time to see men fall prostrate, as it were, before her beauty, but there was something in the high-bred, stately duchess, before which my Lady Doris owned herself vanquished. She did not understand the emotion in Lady Linleigh's face as she led her to the duchess.

"Mamma," she said, in a voice that trembled, "this is Lady Doris Studleigh, my husband's daughter."

The jeweled hands of the duchess trembled as they lay for one half minute on the golden head.

"I am pleased to see you," she said. "You are very fair; I hope you are as good as you are fair."

Lady Doris wondered why, for one half minute, every one around her looked so solemn, why her father's debonair face had lost its color, why Lady Estelle turned so hastily away, why Earle stood looking on with a strange light in his eyes.

It was droll. Then she dismissed the thought. They were all more or less sentimental, and there was no accounting for sentimental people at all.

She was destined the same evening to feel a little more surprised. There had always been the most perfect harmony and sympathy of taste between the earl and his daughter, they resembled each other so closely.

Lady Doris felt half inclined to dislike the duchess; her exclusiveness, her hauteur, awed her after a fashion that was rather disagreeable than otherwise. As usual, she went to the earl for sympathy.

"Papa," she said, "the worst enemy her grace ever had could not call her lively."

"She is no longer young; liveliness is one of the attributes of youth, you know, Doris."

"Yes, but a little more of it would certainly not hurt her, papa."

The earl went to his daughter and laid his hand on her shoulder.

"Doris," he said, "I want to speak to you most particularly, and I want you to pay the greatest attention to what I have to say."

She looked up in wonder at this preamble.

"Let me impress upon you," he said, "that it is my earnest wish that you should treat the duke and the duchess with all the respect, attention, and affection that lies in your power. You can not show them too much, and the more you show them the better shall I be pleased. They are my wife's parents."

"I suppose," thought Doris, "he expects they will leave him a fortune. However, I must trim my bark according to the sea I have to sail on."

So she promised to show all deference, all homage, all respect. She did so. The duke admired her beyond everything; he thought her one of the most beautiful, most graceful, one of the cleverest girls he had ever met.

But the duchess did not like her; she had never forgotten her first impression, that the girl was both vain and wanting in goodness.

She tried to like her, to make the most of her beauty, her talent, but there was no real warmth in her heart toward her daughter's child. Earle, on the contrary, won her honest liking.

In her own mind, although she knew that Doris was the daughter of Lord Linleigh, and the descendant of the Herefords, she thought her inferior to Earl Moray. So this strangely assorted household remained until the time drew near when the earl thought of going to London.

The Duke of Downsbury had promised to do his best in helping to forward the fortunes of Earle Moray. He by this time had recovered from the shock his daughter's story had inflicted on him; still, he considered it best, for many reasons, that the secret should be kept. Lady Doris wondered often how it happened that she was so great a favorite with the duke. He made her costly and beautiful presents; he liked to ride out with her: he enjoyed watching her beautiful face.

"Your daughter is unique," he said one day to Lady Estelle, and her face grew white as she heard the words.

"My daughter!" she repeated. "It seems so strange, papa, to hear that; no one has ever called her 'my daughter' before.

How the gentle heart yearned over her, the proud young beauty, in the flush of her triumph, never knew. She looked upon Lady Linleigh's great love for her as rather tiresome than otherwise; it was annoying to her that she should be visited every evening, and that the countess should study so attentively her every look and word. More than once she spoke impatiently of it to Earle, and wondered that he looked so gravely at her.

"It seems to me," she cried, "that every one studies Lady Linleigh a great deal more than they study me."

She wondered why it was that the fair, proud face was always so tender for her; why the calm eyes always rested on her with a loving light; why the voice that never varied for others, faltered and grew so loving when speaking to her.

Once or twice it occurred to her that if her own mother had been living, she could not have shown greater affection for her than did Lady Estelle Linleigh.

CHAPTER LVII.

SUCH a May day! like one of those that the poets of old described when they wrote of mead and honey. A flash of heaven's own sunshine, a murmur of heaven's own music, a foretaste of the golden glories of summer which were so soon to shine over the land.

A May day, when in the green heart of England, the hawthorn was budding, the perfume of violets filled the air, the cuckoo remained lord of the meadows, the wood pigeons began to coo, the butterflies to coquette with sweet spring flowers—a very carnival of nature.

London had never looked so bright and so gay. The queen had thrown off the black mantle of sorrow, and had come forth once more to gladden the hearts of her faithful people.

She had opened Parliament, and a series of royal fetes had been announced that cheered the whole city with the hope of future prosperity.

Trade, commerce, literature, and art were all encouraged; as all drooped in her absence, so they all revived in the gracious promise of her serene presence.

There was to be on the third of May a grand drawing-room. Great excitement was caused by the announcement that the Countess of Linleigh and the Lady Doris Studleigh were both on this eventful day to be presented, the countess on her marriage, the Lady Doris as a debutante.

Rumor was very busy. There was nothing to wonder about over the countess—she was well known for many London seasons; she had been a belle and a reigning beauty, she was married at last to a popular nobleman, and would doubtless take her place as one of the queens of society; she would give brilliant fetes, head the gayeties of the season.

Hyde House would doubtless become one of the most fashionable resorts of the day; but there all sensation about her ceased.

With Lady Doris it was different; more curiosity was felt to see Lord Linleigh's daughter than his wife. People heard that she was a regular Studleigh, and the memory of the handsome, debonair race was still living among them.

In the time of Charles the Second there had been ladies of the Studleigh family whose names were proverbs for beauty, wit, and recklessness. Strange stories were told of deeds of fun and daring that in people less noble would have been called crimes.

And now on the great world—always a little blase, a little tired of itself, always athirst for novelty—a new star was to shine—a Studleigh, with all the fatal, witching beauty of her race, and the inheritance of wit that was always pointed.

Rumor said she was the loveliest girl on whom the English sun had shone for many years. She would be wealthy, too, for Lord Linleigh was rich.

Expectation was for once fairly aroused then, too, there was something of romance about her story. The marriage of the handsome, popular earl had been a private one; the Lady Doris, it was said, had been educated in the strictest retirement.

People were impatient to see her and pronounce their verdict. She was to be presented by the Duchess of Downsbury, whose name was a guarantee for every good quality.

The eventful day dawned at last. Lord Linleigh had been somewhat anxious over it. True, his daughter's fate in life was fixed—he would not have had her engagement with Earle Moray broken on any account—yet he desired that she should receive all the homage due to her rank and her beauty. No word of her engagement had been made public; that was by Lady Linleigh's advice.

"Give her all the time possible, all the liberty that her heart can desire, and then we shall see if she really prefers Earle to all the world," she said to her husband.

Though he laughed at the advice, he owned it was good.

On that May day surely Lady Doris's dressing-room was one of the prettiest scenes in all London.

The sunbeams crept through the rose-colored blind, and fell on the shining jewels, the costly dresses, the flowers and laces.

For the first time in her life Lady Doris was arrayed in full court costume, and certainly nothing could have suited her better.

The Duke of Downsbury had insisted on presenting her with a magnificent set of diamonds for the occasion, and she wore them now for the first time. She stood in all the splendor of her marvelous beauty and rich costume, smiling at herself in the mirror.

"I do not look much like Doris Brace, the farmer's daughter, now," she said to herself.

Then Lady Linleigh entered the room.

"I could not rest, Doris," she said, "until I had seen you, and know whether you felt nervous or not."

Something like a smile of contempt wreathed the beautiful lips.

"Nervous, Lady Linleigh! not one whit," she replied.

"Now, if I were about being presented to a handsome young monarch, who wanted a queen to reign by his side, I might feel nervous."

"When I was presented," said Lady Linleigh, "I did feel very nervous. I thought of it for days and weeks beforehand."

"You and I, dear Lady Linleigh, differ considerably," said Doris. "I often think myself it is strange, but I am really wanting in that respect—I have no organ of reverence; I do not believe that I stand in awe of any human being."

"It is strange; and I am not sure that such total independence is altogether good for you, my dear. I should like you to bear more on others, less on yourself."

"I am as I was made," laughed the girl; then she blushed slightly, for the earl stood at the door of her dressing-room, looking at her with such admiration in his eyes as they had seldom expressed before. She could not help feeling embarrassed by it. Then she went up to him, saying:

"Now, papa, imagine yourself the queen; let me make you my grand presentation courtesy."

He never forgot her as she stood there, the light flaming in her jewels and falling on the golden hair, the face softened into unusual beauty by the slight flush.

"My darling," said Lord Linleigh, as he laid his hand on her head, "my darling, I am proud of you."

The words were few, but they expressed a whole volume.

"There will not be a fairer girl at the drawing room to-day," he continued. "Yet you must look out for your laurels, Doris. Lady Blanche Trevor is presented to-day, and the Trevors have always been considered the handsomest family in England."

"I am not afraid, papa," was the calm reply. "We should be going now; it is some time since the carriage was announced."

"Doris," said the countess, "stop one minute, dear."

"Doris turned, wonderingly. She detected a faint tremor in the voice. Lady Linleigh's face, too, was very pale.

"Come here one moment," she continued, and Lady Doris went up to her.

The pale, lovely face looked into hers, the gentle hands touched hers, the sweet lips caressed her. The countess took one long tress of the golden hair in her hands.

"I could not let you go out into the

world, my dear," she said, slowly, "without first wishing you all happiness."

All her heart was on her lips, and her voice trembled with emotion. Lady Doris looked at her in a perfect bewilderment of surprise.

"You are very kind to me, Lady Linleigh," she said, and there was something of haughty surprise in her voice which fell like cold snow on the gentle heart.

"You are very kind," she repeated, "but I have no fear."

"It is such a brilliant world, Doris, but so full of pitfalls—oh! my dear, so full of pitfalls for the beautiful and young."

"I will steer clear of them, dear Lady Linleigh," said the impatient voice. "While the May sun is shining and the carriage is at the door, there is hardly time to talk about the dangers of the world. I am quite willing to take them for granted."

Lady Linleigh said to herself that she could not alter her nature; that she was brilliant, polished, cold, beautiful, without warmth of heart, and that she could not help it.

Yet she felt most bitterly disappointed; her heart had yearned for one kind word, for one token of affection from her, but it was not to be.

The earl looked in surprise from his wife to his daughter, but he had made up his mind never to interfere between them, or to appear to notice anything that passed. Then they entered the carriage and drove to St. James'.

Those present will not soon forget the beauty of the women or the splendor of the whole scene.

Never since the days when her royal consort stood by her side had the queen looked better or happier than on this day, when she woke to the sense that the great voice of a mighty nation was calling her.

Noble sons and fair daughters stood around her; the noblest of the realm had hastened to do her homage. The sun that shone upon the palace walls and streamed through the windows fell on no more calm or royal face than hers.

There was some little excitement when the name of the Countess of Linleigh was announced. Many there remembered her years ago, when she had made her debut, and smiled to think that for love of the gallant earl she had remained unmarried all these years.

With the entrance of Lady Doris Studleigh into the royal presence, there was a sensation such as had not been made at the court for many long years.

The girl's glorious beauty, her imperial grace, the proud carriage, the splendor of her jewels, the fascination that seemed to clothe her as a garment—even the royal face lighted up with admiration as the queen's eyes fell on her.

Words more kind than usual came from the royal lady's lips, and her heart beating high with triumph, her position secured, the Lady Doris passed from that gracious presence.

Even as she stood bending low before the queen, she said to herself that she should be a favorite at court, if looks promised anything.

The Duchess of Downsbury was well pleased with her young protege.

"My dear," she said to her, when the ordeal was over, "whatever else you may lack, you certainly have plenty of nerve."

Lady Doris raised her eyes unflinchingly to her grace's face.

"Different people," she said, "give other names to the quality I possess. Your grace calls it nerve—the Studleighs call it courage."

"Well," said the duchess, grimly, "I will call it courage, then; you have plenty of it, Lady Doris."

"I have no doubt," was the smiling reply, "that as I go through the world I shall need it all."

The duchess knew that in a passage at arms, even she, well versed as she was, had no chance with Lady Doris.

In one way she was pleased at her granddaughter's success, although she disliked so much calm self-possession in one so young.

But the earl saw no drawback, he admitted none. Every one was enraptured with the Lady Doris, every one praised her, spoke of her wonderful beauty, and complimented him on having so peerless a daughter.

His heart beat high with pride, yet never once did he wish her engagement with Earle Moray broken. He saw Lady Estelle alone a few minutes before dinner, and then he wondered at the paleness of her face, the depression of her spirits.

"Estelle," he said, gently, "what is the matter?"

It seemed as though the question broke through the flood-gates of her sorrow. She raised her eyes to his—they were streaming with tears.

"I am ungrateful, Ulric," she said. "I am wicked and discontented. I see my darling so beautiful, yet I cannot go to her and clasp her in my arms. I cannot say, 'Child, how I rejoice in you, for you are my own.'"

"No, you can not say that; but you may love her and be as kind to her as you will."

The countess shook her head sadly.

"You do not understand," she said. "Doris is not affectionate by nature, and I can see that my love annoys and teases her. I do not repine, for you love me, Ulric, do you not?"

Love her? Yes, assuredly he did; how could he help it? Yet all the same he did wish that Lady Doris would show greater affection for her unknown mother.

CHAPTER LVIII.

A GROUP of young aristocrats stood in the billiard-room at Bar's Club. Some one had played a game and won it, some one else had lost; there had been high betting, but, strange to say, for once money had lost its charm—billiards their attraction.

"I am told," said the Honorable Charlie Balsover, "that it is a treat to look at her. My sisters were both at the drawing-room, and they declare that they have seen nothing like it."

"Women can not judge of women," said Major Maitland, contemptuously.

The Honorable Charlie looked up haughtily.

"My sisters are as good judges of beauty as any one in England," he said, hastily.

"There can be no question about it," interrupted Lord Piercy; "Lady Studleigh is, par excellence, the beauty of the season. I saw her myself, and—well, it takes a great deal to satisfy me, but she did it."

"We shall have the noble Piercy, spurred and booted, going in for a conquest," laughed another.

"No, my dear boy; I am, fortunately for me, in the full possession of all my senses. I took my own measure very accurately, long ago, and I, for one, should never aspire to such a conquest as that of the Lady Studleigh."

"What rare and touching humility," laughed a fair-haired officer. "I should like to see this paragon."

At that moment they were joined by a tall, handsome man, who, until that moment, had been standing alone at the billiard table, practicing a stroke he wished to master. He sauntered to the little group.

"I have not heard one word that you have been saying, but from the peculiar expression of Piercy's face, I would wager that you were talking of beauty in some shape or other," he said.

"We are talking of a new star which has suddenly arisen in the fashionable skies—the beautiful, golden-haired Lady Studleigh, Lord Linleigh's daughter."

"What of her?" asked Lord Charles Vivianne. "If anything interesting, tell me quickly. At this moment the click of the billiard balls is sweeter to my ears than the praise of fair woman."

"It is my opinion," said Colonel Clifford, laughing, "that in Vivianne's case a burned child dreads the fire. A little bird whispered to me some romantic story about Florence, and some lovely being to whom he was devoted there."

Lord Vivianne turned fiercely on him—so fiercely that those present looked grave.

"It would be as well for you, Clifford," he said, "to refrain from talking of that which does not concern you."

"My dear boy," replied the colonel, "I meant no harm. If I had known that Florence was a sore subject with you I would not have touched upon it."

"Who said it was a sore subject?" cried Lord Vivianne, passionately.

Then, seeing that in all probability a quarrel would ensue, Major Maitland interfered.

"We are forgetting the subject under discussion," he said. "You asked me what it was, Lord Vivianne. We were speaking of the wonderful beauty of Lady Studleigh, the handsome earl's daughter. Have you seen her yet?"

"No," he replied, "I have not."

"Then, by all means, contrive to do so. The Prince of B—— is almost wild about her. Everyone ought to see her, just to know what a really beautiful woman is like."

Then Colonel Clifford, anxious to make up the quarrel, went off in a long and rapturous description of the fair lady's beauty and grace.

"I shall be sure to see her," said Lord Vivianne, briefly. "To tell the truth, I do not feel much interested. A beautiful face is a rarity, and the chances are ten to one the owner is either a simpleton or a flirt. I, for one, shall not offer my admiration at the new beauty's shrine. Au revoir."

And with his usual proud, careless step, Lord Vivianne walked away. The others looked curiously after him.

"I never saw a man so completely changed in all my life," said Colonel Clifford. "He used to be so good-humored, fond of a jest, and able to bear any amount of teasing; and now, one word, and he is like a madman. I shall begin to think what I have heard of him is true."

"What is that?" asked the Honorable Charlie Balsover.

"I was told that he fell in love at Florence. I did not hear all the particulars, but I was told that he completely lost his heart there."

"He never had a heart to lose," said one.

"Who was the lady?" asked another.

"I do not know. Some one said she was a princess in disguise; others, that she was of low origin, but of marvelous beauty. The whole affair was a mystery.

"Some said she was English, others that she was Florentine; in any case, it is believed that she jilted him, and he has never been the same man since.

"He used to boast that no woman had ever resisted him. I believe that he fancied he was irresistible. Perhaps he does not like learning his lesson."

"The biter generally gets bitten," said the Honorable Charlie. "I should not wonder if some one has avenged the wrongs of her sex upon him. He has certainly gone to great lengths."

"Why not call a spade a spade?" said Major Maitland. "Give his follies the right name. He has broken more hearts, ruined more homes, dragged more fair faces through the dust, than any man of his age in England. Serves him right, I say, if he has something to suffer in his turn."

Which was all the sympathy Lord Vivianne received when he was supposed to have suffered at the hands of a woman.

He thought but little over what had been said about Lady Studleigh.

"Men are always making idols of some woman or other," he said to himself. "If they choose to go mad in crowds over the handsome earl's daughter, let them; I, for one, shall not join them."

It had been a great blow to him, the loss of Doris. That one love was the master-passion of his life. He had not intended it to be; he had only thought of her at first as one whose beauty was well worth the winning.

Afterward, when her strange fascination, her wonderful grace, her marvelous talent and wit had bound him fast in her chains, he gave her the one great love of his life, none the less fierce and passionate because he had many love affairs.

While they were still at Florence, he had made up his mind to one of two things: either to be true to her all his life, and spend all his life with her, or to marry her.

As his love increased, his scruples died away; he would marry this beautiful girl, whose coldness had a charm for him that nothing else ever possessed.

His love grew fiercer as she grew colder; he had made up his mind that she should never be parted from him—that he would slay any one who tried to separate them.

When he had found that she had left him, many long months did he spend in searching for her. He had quite decided what to do when he did find her. If any one had bribed her to leave him, the crime should be most dearly avenged. He would tell her that he was willing to make her his wife, and then he would marry her.

"Marry her!" he repeated the words to himself, with a bitter laugh. He would have done anything, have slain her and killed himself; rather than leave her again, or let her go out of his life. She would, of course, be delighted to be Lady Vivianne; it was not likely that she would refuse such an offer. He sneered at himself for being willing to make it; he sneered at himself for his great, overweening love. He hated himself because it had won such power over him—because it had humbled him even to the yoke of marriage.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

TIME well used yields to man eternal good and imperishable happiness. By a proper use of time man can attain to the highest pinnacle of culture; he can acquire what all the money in the world cannot purchase—wisdom, which is the true end of man upon the stage of existence.

Bric-a-Brac.

SUNDOWN MEN.—"Sundown doctors" is the appellation said to be applied in the city of Washington to a class of practitioners who are clerks in the Government offices and who have taken a medical degree with a view to practising after the hours of their official work are over.

COINS.—To read an inscription on a silver coin which by much wear has become wholly obliterated, put the poker in the fire, when red hot place the coin upon it, and the inscription will plainly appear of a greenish hue, but will disappear as the coin cools. This method was formerly practiced at the mint to discover the genuine coin when silver was called in.

NATIONAL FLOWERS.—National flowers have been adopted in various countries as follows: Greece, violets; Canada, sugar maple; Egypt, lotus; England, rose; France, fleur-de-lis; Germany, corn-flower; Ireland, shamrock; Italy, lily; Prussia, linden; Saxony, mignonette; Scotland, thistle; Spain, pomegranate; Wales, leek.

THE SEA CUCUMBER.—The sea cucumber, one of the curious jelly bodies that inhabit the ocean, can practically efface himself when in danger by squeezing the water out of his body and forcing himself into a narrow crack—so narrow as not to be visible to the naked eye. He can throw out nearly the whole of his inside, and yet live and grow again.

SNAKES.—Snakes are altogether absent from Ireland, and the whole class of reptiles is represented by only a single species—viz., the common viviparous lizard. Even the frog, which is abundant enough in Ireland, is by many Irish naturalists denied the right to be considered a true native, and among the newts only one kind has hitherto been observed.

OIL.—The oily character of the menhaden is familiar; it is caught for its oil, which is dried out in factories. Menhaden fishermen use purse nets, which are tarred to preserve them. To keep their hands from sticking to the tarred nets they rub them on a freshly caught menhaden, handling it something as they would a cake of soap. So oily is the menhaden that the simple pressure thus applied is enough to bring through the scales oil sufficient for the purpose.

TURKEY.—The origin of the word "turkey" has been much disputed. By some it is thought to be derived from the call of the female bird, which, by a stretch of imagination, has appeared to them like "Turk, turk." Others, in the past, were under the erroneous impression that the bird was a native of Turkey, whence it took its appellation. But its name really arose from its having been imported into England at the time when all merchants were popularly known as Turkey merchants.

THE LOBSTER.—The lobster's legs, all told, are ten in number, but only eight of these are largely used for walking. The front pair, or big claws, have been specialized, as in the crab and most other of the higher crustaceans, into prehensive organs for catching and crushing the prey. Their use is obvious. Lobsters feed largely off mollusks of various sorts and other hard-shelled marine animals; in order to be able to break or crush the shells of these, and so get at the soft fish within, they have acquired such large and very muscular nippers or pincers.

EARLY ALMANACS.—The history of written almanacs dates back to the second century of the Christian era. The Alexandrian Greeks in the time of Ptolemy, A. D. 100-160, used almanacs. Prior to the written almanacs of the Greeks there were calendars of primitive almanacs. The Roman fasti sacri were similar to modern almanacs. Knowledge of the calendar was at first confined to the priests, whom the people had to consult not only about the dates of festivals, but also concerning the proper time for instituting various legal proceedings.

SERFDOM IN SIAM.—Serfdom is universal in Siam, with the result that a man is quite uncertain when he may call his time and his labor his own. For so many months in the year he is bound to serve his chief, and at any time he may be called on for "special King's service." For instance, when a Prince is on his travels, every district through which he passes is called upon to supply him with food and transport. If news comes that a Prince or high official is traveling, it is not uncommon for owners of boats to request a European subject to take temporary charge of them, whilst they themselves disappear into the jungle. Elephants can always be taken for the King's service.

ADMIRABLE THINGS.

BY G. L. H.

The hand outstretched to meet a brother's.
A life exposed in saving others.
God's preacher seeking out distress,
Wish will and power to make it less.
The soaring student boy retired,
With holy inspiration fired.
Love's mission, overleaping creed.
Teaching the deaf and blind to read.
The hand that wields the hammer, then
With equal skill takes up the pen.
The patriot toiling for his kind,
With energetic soul and mind.
The steam press, engine, forge, and plow.
Pearl-drops on the laborer's brow.
The poet's sweet and hopeful song.
Humanity waging war with Wrong.
A mother, at the close of day
Teaching her little ones to pray.
The Christian spirit taking flight,
From this dim world to endless light.
And all things as through life we plod,
Which brings us nearer truth and God.

AFTER LONG YEARS

BY THE AUTHOR OF "GLORY'S LOVERS," "AN ARCH-IMPOSTOR," "HUSHED UP!" "A LOVER FROM OVER THE SEA," ETC."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—(CONTINUED.)

THE Sister walked a little in front of him to show him the way, the crowd, of course, followed them open-mouthed. Gerald carried the child into the neat little room of the Village Hospital, and the doctor came in.

"I will wait outside, and hear what is amiss with him," said Gerald.

Presently the Sister came out to him.

"He is not very much hurt," she said. "He was half stunned by striking his head when he was knocked down, and very frightened. Would you like to see him?"

Gerald said he should, and he followed her in. The boy, very large-eyed and pale, looked inclined to whimper; but Gerald addressed him in just the proper tone, and so arrested the tears.

"Well, my little man?" he said. "I'm glad to see you are not very much hurt after all." He sat down beside him and took his hand. "I suppose his people are coming?" he said to the Sister in an undertone.

"He's an orphan," said Sister Agnes. "But I will take charge of him."

"Then he will do very well!" said Gerald.

Sister Agnes, from the other side of the bed, raised her eyes, and looked at Gerald's handsome, sun-tanned face with a nervousness that was quite foreign to her; and Gerald, as he met her gaze, felt the same strange sensation of which he had been conscious when he first saw her face. There was a troubled and preoccupied expression in her eyes, and her hand trembled as it smoothed the counterpane.

"You have been very kind," she said. "I have not thanked you yet!"

Gerald smiled.

"I've done very little," he said. "He will need all his thanks for you, mother."

He had addressed her by the maternal title often accorded to the Sisters of the Poor; but it seemed to have a strange effect upon her. She grew deadly pale, her lips quivered, and Gerald fancied that the sad, patient eyes had grown suddenly moist.

"I am called Sister," she said.

"I beg your pardon," he said reverently. "But I expect you are mother as well as sister to many of these poor folk. May I know your name?"

"I am called Sister Agnes," she said, in a low voice.

"Sister Agnes," he repeated, as reverently as before. "May I come in to see the little fellow again?" he asked. "I am staying here for a day or two. I am a stranger here, and putting up at the hotel."

She seemed to listen as if she were listening to something more than his words, and it was evident that she was battling with an agitation quite unusual with her.

"Yes," she said, in a low voice. "He will be glad to see you. I shall keep him here until he has quite recovered."

Gerald rose, but was conscious of a strange reluctance to go. Something about this sad-faced, white haired Sister of Mercy, cast a kind of spell over him. He knew that he had never seen her before, and yet it seemed to him as if he had not only seen her, but known her very well.

He attributed this peculiar feeling to the influence, subtle and not to be described, exercised by her sacred calling, and the patient sadness and gentleness of her voice and manner. For the sake of saying something, an excuse for lingering, he said—

"Can you tell me the way to Arundel House?"

She raised her eyes to his, with a half-startled questioning, and her lips moved for a moment or two without speech. She told him.

"Are you going there?" she asked. "You have friends there?"

"Yes," said Gerald, "I am going to see a young lady named Harling."

She repeated the name, then sank into the chair beside the couch, with her head bent and her hands clasped together. Gerald was alarmed, and thought that she was ill.

He went round to her and bent over her.

"Are you ill?" he asked. "This has upset you! Can I get you a glass of water?"

She rose, but looked so fragile, so tremulous, and likely to fall, that Gerald ventured to put his hand upon her arm supportingly. She trembled still more, and looked into his face with a half-fearful, half-yearning expression in her eyes.

"It's all right," said Gerald, in his cheery way, and yet with a tenderness and gentleness which brought the tears to her eyes. "There's no need to be troubled about him; the little fellow is all right. Sit down and rest; I'll send the Nurse to you."

She had, perhaps unconsciously, put her hand upon his. She drew it away now, and turned her head aside so that the veil hid her face.

"No, no!" she said. "I am all right. Do not send her; I would rather be alone."

Gerald's hand lingered on her arm for a moment or two. He also was agitated.

"I will come again," he said, and slowly left the room.

When he had gone, Sister Agnes covered her white face with her hand.

"What is it?" she moaned to herself. "The voice—the face seemed to go to my heart! Why did I not ask him his name? And he is going to see some people of the name of Harling! Oh, I am in deep waters, deep waters!"

Her lips moved in silent prayer for a moment or two, but when the nurse re-entered, Sister Agnes was as calm and placid—though paler than usual, perhaps—as was her wont.

Gerald went to the hotel and got some dinner. All through the meal his meeting with Sister Agnes haunted and troubled him; and when he went to sleep, he dreamed that she was standing beside the bed, and was bending over him with a look on her face which one sees in the pictured faces of the saints.

After breakfast next morning, he made his way to Arundel House. The street was full of children, for it was Saturday, and a holiday, and Gerald, who was fond of children, looked at them as he threaded his way through the groups, with a pleasant smile. He was told that Miss Harling was in.

"At least, I think she is, sir," said the servant. "If you'll come upstairs." She opened the drawingroom door, and Gerald entered.

A lady was sitting with her back to the light. She was reading, and did not look up for the moment, and Gerald went towards her with "Miss Grace!" on his lips, then he stopped dead short, as if he had been shot.

The lady looked up, uttered an exclamation, and so they stared at each other for the space of a second, in breathless silence. Gerald was the first to speak.

"Claire—Miss Sartoris!" he exclaimed, as if he could not believe that she was really there within, a few paces of him: and, indeed, he could not.

The book dropped from Claire's lap as she rose. All the color had fled from her face and her lips were tightly compressed, as if her heart were throbbing painfully.

"Mr. Wayre!" she said. The sight of her agitation increased his.

"You here, Miss Sartoris!" he said. "How is this?"

Claire was making a tremendous effort to regain her self-possession. The sight of him set every nerve in her body thrilling, as the strings of a harp thrill to the touch of a familiar hand.

"Why should I not be here, Mr. Wayre?" she said, trying to speak coldly. Her manner roused Gerald's spirit; after all he had endured a great deal at her hands, and even a worm will turn if you tread on it too hard.

"Miss Sartoris," he said, "you speak to me, you look at me—even at this moment of surprise, when we meet, to our mutual astonishment—as if I had committed some capital crime, or offended you beyond hope of pardon!"

Claire bit her lip.

"You did not come to see me?" she asked.

"No," he said, almost sternly, "I came to see Miss Harling."

"She is a friend of mine; I am staying with her. I will go and fetch her."

"One moment, if you please, Miss Sartoris!" said Gerald, rather gravely. "I am aware that I have no right to ask the question, but—well, I flattered myself that you once honored me with your friendship, and I will, therefore, venture to ask you why you have left the Court, concealed your address, and caused your friends—I am thinking of others besides myself—great anxiety?"

Claire looked down, but made no reply.

"Very well!" he said, "I take your silence as an intimation that it is no business of mine; but, Miss Sartoris, I have now to ask you a question which I deem I have a right to put!"

Claire began to tremble. And yet how sweet to her was the voice, stern, and almost angry, as it was!

"The last time I saw you I had the audacity to tell you that I loved you!"

The color rose to Claire's face, and her eyes began to glow under her lips.

"It was an audacity, I admit, and very likely you only treated me as I deserved to be treated."

Claire's lips parted, as if she were about to speak, but she remained silent.

"You dismissed me very promptly, very haughtily. As I said, I have no right to complain of that, but I do complain of your after treatment of me, and I am so loath to believe that it was inspired by a pride quite unworthy of you that I feel that it is only just to you to give you an opportunity of telling me why you have treated me so cruelly. What have I done—beyond daring to love you—that merits such treatment?"

He had poured all this out in a kind of "stand and deliver" way, but it was evident that he was deeply agitated by her presence, by the sight of the lovely face which was never out of his dreams.

Claire went very pale. "I do not deny that right, Mr. Wayre," she said, "and if you insist upon an answer, I will tell you why my—our—friendship—should cease!"

"Tell me, please!" said Gerald, curtly.

"In one word, then," said Claire, almost inaudibly; "What has become of Lucy Hawker?"

Though he had half expected this, Gerald was staggered. "You—you believed it then?" he said. He was silent for a moment, fighting with his indignation, then he said, with a forced calm, "You believed that I was guilty? Well!" he laughed bitterly, "after all, it's so wonderful! The evidence was very strong; I left the place the same day; and yet, surely there must have been some doubt in your mind! Couldn't you, in common charity, have given me the benefit of that doubt?"

The appeal went straight to Claire's heart, but she tried to steel herself. "I saw you with her in the park the night you—you left me!" she said, slowly, painfully.

Gerald stared at her. "Well! I do not care! The girl came up to me, mistaking me for someone else; she was in trouble. I comforted her, as I would comfort and console any helpless woman, child, dog—what you will!"

Then his eyes flashed and his face grew crimson. "Good heavens! Did you think me capable of uttering words of love to you one moment, and—and intriguing with a village girl the very next? Why, no one in this wide world could be such a monster of treachery and deceit!"

Claire had believed it; but now she believed it no longer. There was truth in his voice, in his flashing eyes. A hot wave of shame, remorse, self-loathing swept over her.

Oh, if she had but seen him before! Why had she not sent for him? Why had she not? But what was the use of asking foolish questions now?

There he stood, a strong man, filled with just wrath and indignation, and she was a cowering, remorseful woman, aching with love, and the desire for forgiveness!

She longed to throw herself into his arms, to sink at his feet, to plead for one look; one word of the old love she had cast away for pride's sake, but she felt powerless to move, and no word would pass her lips.

And Gerald, half-blinded by his anger and misery, did not understand what was passing through her heart. "Very well!" he said. "You have answered me, Miss Sartoris! It only remains for me to tell you that you have still some justification for your suspicions, but——" At this moment the door opened, and Grace ran in.

"Whatever is the matter?" she began, and then, at sight of Gerald, she stopped and looked from one to the other with an intense questioning. Then she said, "You know him! You are friends?"

"No, Miss Grace!" broke out Gerald. "We were friends, but Miss Sartoris has withdrawn her friendships! My meeting with her here is quite unexpected. I came to see you! I will come again! Miss Sartoris," he turned to Claire.

"I will only add one word to what I have already said. I left Regna on that day in one of the coasting vessels—the Susan. She is on a voyage now, but she may return any day. The hour she sails into Regna harbor my innocence of the dastardly crime of which you have deemed me guilty, will be clearly proved. Good-day."

He strode from the room, leaving the two girls standing there like two leaves round which a storm has been sweeping. There was silence for a minute or two, then Grace crept up to Claire, and, putting her hand on Claire's shoulder, looked up into her face.

"Claire!" she whispered. "It is you—you he loves!" There was a pause as her eyes dwelt on Claire's searchingly; then she added, "And you love him!"

"Yes!" said Claire. "I—I love him—and I have lost him!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

GERALD went away from Arundel House fuming. At sight of Claire, his love for her rose flame-like, and devoured him.

That she should have thought him guilty of such hideous treachery and deceit—that she should have doubted the sincerity of his love for her, and deemed him capable of bestowing a thought upon another woman, drove him mad.

"I've seen her for the last time!" he said to himself; and then he groaned; for, oh, how he loved her! How beautiful, how queenly, and yet how sweet, she was!

He loved her better, more passionately than ever! Well, he'd go away. Directly he had solved the mystery of Lucy's disappearance, he would leave England, and never come back to it.

He was so agitated and bewildered that he did not ask himself why Claire was living in London, and why she had concealed her address; and he walked about the pretty streets and commons of Streatham like a man half demented.

After awhile, he remembered the injured lad and his promise to go and see him. He went round to the Village Hospital, and found the boy very much better. While he was sitting beside him and talking to him in the way that children love, Sister Agnes came in.

She looked very pale and even sadder than she had done the day before, and she stopped short when she saw him, as if his presence startled her. Gerald felt again the peculiar sensation—the indefinable interest—which had been aroused when first he saw her.

"You have come!" she said. "He is very much better; he has been talking of you, and been wishing to thank you."

She bent over the child and kissed him, then sank into the chair on the opposite side of the bed to Gerald. They talked for some few minutes, as much to the boy as to each other, and, presently, the lad fell asleep, lulled, perhaps, by the Sister's softly-placid voice. Suddenly, yet gently, Sister Agnes said—

"You are looking ill this morning; are you ill?"

Gerald was rather startled by the question, gently as it was put.

"No," he said; then an impulse, a man's craving for a woman's sympathy, took possession of him. "No, I'm not ill; but I am in trouble."

"I am sorry!" she murmured, in a low voice. "I wish—I wish that I could help you! Do not deem me presumptuous. The weakest and most insignificant of us can help—sometimes—the strongest and most self-reliant."

"Well," he said, with a miserable little laugh, "I've just quarreled with the woman I love! I'm afraid that you will think that a trifling kind of trouble; but it's a very big one to me, and is almost unendurable. What is it the poet says? 'To be wroth with those we love doth work like madness in the brain.' I don't know whether I've got it quite correctly, but it just expresses what I feel."

"Perhaps you will make it up and 'be friends' again," she said softly, and with a deep interest in her voice and eyes.

Gerald shook his head and sighed.

"I'm afraid not," he said. "I'm afraid I've seen her for the last time. I shall leave England very soon, and—I don't know why I tell you this, Sister Agnes, but, somehow, I feel as if—as if we were not strangers, as if we had known each other for a long time."

She bent her head.

"I am glad to hear you say that," she said almost inaudibly. "I wish I could help you!"

He sighed.

"Thank you, thank you! But no one can help me, I'm afraid. It's just a piece of bad luck."

"There is no such thing as luck, chance," she murmured. "There is a Divinity doth shape our ends, rough-hew them how we will. We are all in the hands of a ruling Providence who guides our weak and blundering steps to the appointed end."

"Mine have been weak and blundering enough," he said. "I'm a kind of waif and stray; one of those straws that get blown about the world with every puff of wind."

"You speak as if you were alone in the world," she said, after a pause.

"I am," said Gerald, rather sadly. "I haven't a relation that I know of——"

"Your father—mother?" she asked, with head still bent, and face hidden from him by her veil.

"Both dead. I never knew them. I should have been a better man—and a happier—if my mother had been left to me. I've never heard a chum speak of his mother without feeling a pang of envy. But I'm boring you, Sister! This little chap sleeps soundly, doesn't he?"

As he spoke, he smoothed the sheet under the pointed little chin. In doing so he let his hand linger on the bed; it happened to be the left, and the ring he wore—the ring Claire had found for him in the room of the west wing—shone conspicuously against the whiteness of the counterpane. The Sister's eyes rested on it, absently enough for a moment, then, suddenly she bent forward, gazing at the ring as if spell-bound.

"That—that is a handsome ring you wear," she said. "Will—will you let me look at it?"

"Certainly!" said Gerald, and he took it off and held it out to her. She took it after a moment, and examined it. He could not see her face or its pallor would have alarmed him.

"Have you had—where did you get? Forgive me; but——" she broke off, as if she could not frame the question.

"The ring? I've had it ever since I was a boy," she said easily.

"To whom did it belong?" she asked, in a subdued voice.

"To my father or mother, I don't know which. The people who took charge of me gave it to me, and, strange to say, I have kept it through all my wanderings and vicissitudes. I have been hard-up times out of number, but I never could bring myself to part with it. It was a kind of link of the past, the only link, for the rest of the chain has disappeared."

She laid the ring on the bed, her face still averted.

"You speak as if—as if there were some mystery about—about your birth," she said, with calm, almost monotonous, voice.

"There is," he said. "I'm afraid it is a very commonplace one," he added, as he slipped the ring on his finger, and turned it over thoughtfully.

"Will you tell me your name? I do not know it yet—the boy asked me—I could not tell him."

"Gerald Wayre!" he said.

She neither moved nor spoke, and yet Gerald felt as if his answer had in some way affected her; perhaps, because of her silence.

"Well, I must be going," he said. "I am glad the little fellow is all right, and—and I am glad to have met you, Sister. Perhaps,"—his voice grew softer and full of a certain reverence—"perhaps we shall meet again."

"Yes," she said, in a strangely unemotional voice. "Will you tell me where you are going?"

"I am going back into the country—to a place called Regna." She rose, then sank down, and her hands clasped each other spasmodically.

"I shall go to-morrow night, I think. But I am not going to remain there. I shall leave England presently; I've nothing to stay for—now. Good-bye, Sister Agnes!"

She did not rise, but stretched out her thin hand, and he took it, and held it. He could not see her face, but he fancied that her hand trembled, and he felt vaguely troubled and moved and he raised her hand to his lips, and kissed it reverently.

Her lips parted with a deep sigh; she raised her eyes for a moment and looked at him, then, with a faint "Good-bye," bent her head, and so hid her face under the veil.

"The ring—his ring!" she murmured, hoarsely, as he left the room. "The name, my name! and Regna! Oh God, deal mercifully with me! If the hope that has arisen within my heart is more than a baseless dream, give me strength to bear my great joy!" she prayed.

Gerald felt all the better for his interview with Sister Agnes, and in a calmer state of mind went round to Arundel House the next morning. He asked for Miss Harling, but, in his innermost heart, he hoped to see Claire, of course, and he was considerably staggered when the maid said—

"Miss Harling's out of town, sir."

"Out of town!" echoed Gerald, almost incredulously. Was it possible that she declined to see him? he asked himself bitterly.

"Yes, sir; she'd a letter from her father directly after you was here yesterday, and went off early this mornin'. Is there any message?"

Gerald shook his head and went back to the hotel in a state of mind more easily imagined than described. Then he went up to London to catch the night mail for Downshire.

The letter that had arrived for Grace had surprised her, accustomed as she was to her father's erratic movements. In effect, it said—

"Come down by the eleven o'clock train from Waterloo to Yoeford, and bring Miss Sartoris with you. I have a special and important reason for wishing her to accompany you. I will meet you at Yoeford."

Claire was at Arundel House when this rather peremptory epistle arrived, and had at first said that it was impossible she should go; but Grace had declared that she could not, and would not go without her, and had, herself, gone round to Miss Gover, and begged for a holiday for Claire.

It was not difficult to get, for Miss Gover knew that the change would do Claire good, and was able to fill her place with a pupil teacher. Sister Agnes, too, helped to persuade Claire.

"You will not be gone long, my child," she said, "and you will come back strengthened for your work."

So, at last, Claire yielded, and the two girls started. Grace was not in the best of spirits, and Claire was very quiet and thoughtful.

She was running away from London—perhaps from her only chance of seeing Gerald again.

She and Grace had said very little about him beyond those few words which Grace had uttered after Gerald had left the room, but she had told Claire of the way in which Gerald had saved her life, and Claire had listened with downcast eyes, and rather tremulous lips.

She was thinking of him when the train reached Yoeford, and almost started when Grace said—

"Claire, I wonder why my father has sent for us—where we are going, and why he so specially wanted you?"

"From sheer kindness," said Claire.

Grace shook her head.

"Of course; I know that he would be glad to have you come with us. But don't you remember what he said in his note about a special and important reason!"

Claire smiled.

"His special and important reason lies in his desire to give a pleasant change, Grace," she said. "What other reason could he have?"

"I don't know," said Grace, thoughtfully. "But I soon shall," she added.

Claire looked out of the window dreamily. How long ago it seemed since she had fled from the Court, homeless and well-nigh penniless! How often she had traveled on the same line, just Miss Sartoris, a teacher, on probation, at the heiress of Court Regna. And now she has a national school!"

At Yoeford, Grace, who was looking out eagerly, exclaimed—

"Here is father!"

And Mr. Harling opened the carriage door.

"There are two portmanteaus, father," she began, as she got her things together in preparation for alighting. But Mr. Harling smiled, and pushed her gently back into her seat.

"We don't get out here, Grace. How do you do, Miss Sartoris? It was very good of you to come! I have had the portmanteaus re-labelled——"

"Not get out here! Why, where are we going, then?" demanded Grace, opening her blue eyes at their widest.

Mr. Harling smiled, and looked at Claire curiously.

"Are you very anxious to know, Miss Sartoris?"

"Of course she is!" broke in Grace. "Why, ever since we got your letter we have spent the time asking each other why you sent for us, and where we were going. Tell us, father!"

"We are going to Thraxton—is Miss Sartoris has no objection."

Claire colored, painfully.

"To Thraxton!" she echoed.

Then she looked at him questioningly; but the old gentleman shook his head slightly, as if withholding the explanation.

"And why Thraxton, father?" said Grace.

"Why not that as well as any other place, my dear?" he retorted, quietly.

And Grace, shrugging her shoulders, subsided, remarking—

"Few girls have such a trying father as mine, Claire; especially when he has any mysterious business on hand. I suppose we shall have to wait until he wishes to explain."

"There is a nice old ruined castle at Thraxton," he said, mildly, but with a twitch at the corners of his mouth.

Claire said nothing. But she felt rather mean and secretive, and her embarrassment increased as they neared Thraxton.

Ought she to tell these good friends that she had been the owner of the well-known Court Regna that lay just beyond the place they were going to? Once or twice she almost made up her up her mind to lean forward and tell Mr. Harling; but her resolution could not be brought to a sticking point.

When they reached the station, Mr. Harling helped them out, and offered his arm to Claire.

"I have a carriage waiting," he said, quietly. And he led them to a pair-horse barouche, the best the hotel could turn out.

"Where are we going, father?" asked Grace, rather pettishly. "We seem to be driving right through the town?"

"We are!" said Mr. Harling. "Lean back, and let me cover you up with the rug. We are going to a place called Regna——"

Claire could not repress a startled exclamation.

"To Regna!" she said. "Mr. Harling, I—— Oh! why did I come?" And her face flushed, and grew pale in turns.

"Because you were kind enough to trust one who desires—with all his heart—to be a friend, my dear," he said, impressively. "I knew that if I wrote that we were going to Regna you—well, that you would not come!"

"No!" said Claire. "I—I—— Oh! if you knew!"

"Perhaps I do know," he said, soothingly. "Perhaps I know more about it than even you do, my dear."

"That—that I once lived at the Court?" said Claire, amazed.

"Yes," he said. "And why you left it."

They had been speaking in tones too low to reach Grace. But Claire's exclamation as she heard his words attracted Grace's attention, and he touched Claire's hand warningly.

"Will you trust me a little longer, Miss Sartoris?" he said. "I will promise that, though you may see cause for surprise and even doubt, that I will do nothing indiscreet or prejudicial to your interests. I have a reason for asking you to accompany me to the Court——"

"The Court! Oh, I cannot go there!" exclaimed Claire, deeply agitated. "Indeed, I cannot go there!"

"It is too late," said Mr. Harling, with kindly decision. "We are passing in at the gates now. Be calm, my dear; you have, I hope, I may say, a *friend* with you who will protect, and, please God, right you!"

Claire sank back, very pale now, and trying hard to be calm and self-possessed. The whole business was at present a mystery to her.

Her mind was confused by her unexpected presence at the Court—the Court of which she was no longer mistress—and Mr. Harling's evident acquaintance with her loss.

And what memories—not only of her lost wealth and station—but of Gerald—the familiar drive awakened.

She trembled so much as the carriage stopped and Mr. Harling helped her out, that he stopped for a moment, and patted her hand encouragingly.

"What! Where are we, father?" exclaimed Grace, staring at the house, and then at them.

"At Court Regna—Miss Sartoris' house, my dear," he replied, quietly.

"No, no!" exclaimed Claire, breathlessly. "Let me explain. Oh! I cannot go in!"

For Mr. Harling had led her into the hall, and the butler was coming forward with surprise and pleasure fighting for mastery in his face.

"Oh! I—we—didn't know you were coming home, miss!" he said. "I'm afraid the rooms——! But I'll see the housekeeper."

"I am not going to stay," began Claire, almost too confused to speak, and not a little moved by the man's evident joy at her return. But Mr. Harling pressed her arm.

"I think you will stay," he said, in a low tone.

Meanwhile, Grace had looked about her with mingled astonishment and admiration. In the course of the talk which had naturally followed on Grace's discovery that Gerald was Claire's lover, Grace had learned something of Claire's story; but she had not imagined that the house which Claire had lost was so large and imposing.

"And this was yours, dear?" she exclaimed, under breath. "Oh! how could you bear to lose it? And why has father brought us here? I wish he would tell us. But that is the worst of him; he can be as secretive as a jackdaw when he likes! I am simply burning with curiosity and trembling with excitement.

She whispered this as the butler led them to the small drawingroom, and quickly lit the candles. "I will have the fire lit immediately, miss, and send a maid to you——"

"No, no!" said Claire, quickly and decisively. "I am not going to remain!"

As she spoke they heard a step shuffle across the hall, and old Sapley entered.

"Who is this?" he demanded, in his harsh voice, and peering across the dimly-lit room. "Who is it?"

Mr. Harling stepped forward.

"It is Miss Sartoris, Mr. Sapley. Miss Sartoris and her friend, my daughter."

Old Sapley stopped dead short, and stared, and his sharp eyes turned from one to the other with a surprised gleam in them.

"Mr. Mordaunt!" he said to the butler. "Mr. Mordaunt: he is in the library." Then he turned to Claire. "Glad to see you, Miss Sartoris. You have come to make some proposal, I suppose? Or just come to look at the old place, eh? Very pleased to see you. And your young lady friend. Take a chair."

But Claire still stood, looking straight before her, her face pale, her brows knit. Why, she was asking herself, had these kind friends subjected her to this humiliation?

The door opened, and Mordaunt entered. Even at that moment, Claire was startled by the look of his face; it had the expression which was like the shadow of despair, as if he had a presentiment that his luck was changing.

"Miss Sartoris!" he exclaimed, with a forced smile of welcome. "This is a pleasant surprise! When did you arrive? Why did you not let us know? Your rooms are being prepared for you and your friends." He glanced from one to the other with a simulation of pleasant welcome.

Claire raised her eyes.

"I came unexpectedly, unwillingly, Mr. Mordaunt," she said. "I shall not stay——"

"Oh! but, indeed——" he murmured.

But his father interrupted him, with a harsh laugh.

"What's all this mean?" he exclaimed, sardonically. "There's some meaning in it—some trick or other! Whatever it is, out with it! Miss Sartoris might have been welcome enough a little while ago, when we offered to make terms. But things have altered. Court Regna is hers no longer——"

"Pardon me," said Mr. Harling, smoothly. "That is a strange mistake for you—a lawyer—to make, Mr. Sapley! Let me remind you that the notice of foreclosure has not expired yet, and that Miss Sartoris is in her own house, is sole mistress of Court Regna!"

"No, no!" murmured Claire, painfully. "Let us go. Please let us go! I surrendered it long ago to Mr. Sapley."

"I beg of you to be silent—to leave this to me, my dear!" said Mr. Harling, quickly, but gently. Then he turned to the old man—

"I am right, am I not?"

Old Sapley glared at him.

"Strictly speaking, yes," he said, with a snarl. "But Miss Sartoris gave up——"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

AFTER LONG WAITING.

BY A. E. G.

We stood together; cold and grey
  Was all the winter scene,
And as our last good-byes were said,
  A dead leaf fell between.
The tears were in your eyes, sweetheart,
  Downcast your sunny head,
And, as the brown leaf fluttered down,
  'Twas like our hopes, you said.

Once more together: but long years
  Have left on both their trace;
A graver light is in your eyes,
  Deep lines are on my face.
God took our roses; they, perhaps,
  Had faded long ago;
And in their place gives berries red,
  To cheer the afterglow.

Now hand in hand, my own sweet wife,
  Together, I and you,
Will make these later years of life
  A garden fair to view.
Heart close to heart—though far apart—
  So faithful we have been,
God in His mercy sure will let
  No dead leaves fall between.

"That Wild Thing!"

BY H. E. E.

"H'M!" ejaculated Doctor Manby, running his eyes over an open letter that lay before him on the breakfast table.

Though it was the middle of May, the morning was chilly, and a cheerful fire was blazing in the grate.

The doctor had drawn his chair as close to the fender as possible, in order to enjoy the full benefit of the genial warmth.

Miss Manby glanced up from the illegible effusion she was perusing; but, as the doctor said no more, her attention reverted to her own letter, and she was laboriously deciphering its contents when a second "H'm!"—more perplexed, more like a groan than the preceding one—made her look up again.

"Well?" she said interrogatively.

"Awkward — exceedingly awkward!" continued the doctor musingly, too much absorbed to hear his sister's question.

"What is awkward? What is your letter about?" she asked, observing the black bordered paper.

"I don't see any way out of it. We're in a regular fix! But what in the world are quiet people like ourselves to do with her?" grumbled the doctor, smoothing the letter meditatively between his finger and thumb.

"Give me the letter!" cried Miss Manby, snatching it out of his hand.

This broke the spell, and the doctor launched into a deliberate explanation.

"Captain Kelly's mother is dead, and Nora is left without a soul to look after her! The trustees want us to——"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Miss Manby, who was not listening to a word her brother said, but simply commenting on what she was reading. "That wild thing!"

"The old lady went off quite suddenly—paralysis. He makes no mention of the nature of the stroke—very unsatisfactory that," continued the doctor, in ignorance of the fact that his words were not attended to.

"We cannot have her—that is very certain!" said Miss Manby, waxing more indignant and more positive the farther she read. "She would upset the peace and order of the whole house!"

"I never thought Kelly was worth that! One hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars! Upon my word, the girl will be a nice catch for some one by-and-by!" said the doctor, at length becoming aware that his information was tendered too late.

"Twenty-five thousand pounds indeed! I wonder what the Revenue was defrauded of to enable him to amass that!" Miss Manby cried sneeringly. "A pretty thing it would be to burden yourself with the responsibility of a smuggler's property and his child!"

"You are hard on Kelly, Eliza. The matter was never really brought home to him."

"Of course not—he was too deep for that! I always had my ideas on the subject, and this confirms them. Ellinor should have considered before she brought such disgrace upon the family; she could not expect us to make such a sacrifice. But there—she always was headstrong!"

"Disgrace?" repeated the doctor. "The marriage was all clear enough!"

"Undoubtedly!" was the indignant rejoinder. "But don't you call a runaway match a disgrace to a girl in Ellinor's position? I never thought I should be able to hold my head up again after it! An Irish captain, too, whose dealings on the coast were more than suspicious! I always said no good would come of it!"

"It seems to me that good has come of it," answered the doctor, rubbing his hands together complacently. "Whether it will be productive of comfort for you and me to have the girl here is another question."

"Certainly not, Richard! How can you think of it? She was a self-willed ill-mannered young minx when I was in Ireland three years ago, scudding about barefoot on the sands, climbing the rocks like a boy, bird's-nesting, coming home when and how she pleased, with torn frocks and hair like the mane of a wild horse! Oh, preserve me from such a child of nature!"

Doctor Manby turned his attention to his neglected egg and was silent, and then, after a pause, began again.

"Nora is three years older since you were over there, Eliza."

"Yes—three years worse in every way!"

Another pause, during which the brother and sister both stared into the fire.

"We cannot let Ellinor's child run wild for want of a home, Eliza," said Doctor Manby at length.

"We can't tame her, you mean; she is wild!"

A ring at the surgery bell interrupted the colloquy, and Doctor Manby was called out.

The announcement of Nora's grandmother's death was followed by other letters more or less urgent, so graphically setting forth the unprotected state of the "wild" young heiress that after a few weeks her uncle and aunt resigned themselves to what they felt was inevitable. Nora Kelly was consequently on her way from Ireland.

And now, just when Richard Manby was looking forward with something very like pleasure to the girl's arrival, a sudden attack of "that plaguey rheumatic gout" seized him, making him a fixture in his arm chair, and obliging him to intrust his patients to his dreaded rival.

Nora would be at the station at ten minutes to four. The doctor glanced again at the letter that had just come by the midday post. There was a distance of seven miles to drive; the old mare was in the stable with a sprained knee; the pony was young and vicious, and hitherto he had never trusted anybody but himself to drive it; and, to make matters worse, Miss Manby was in bed with a severe attack of indigestion.

"Just as if Eliza couldn't have warded off her dyspepsia for another day!" growled the doctor. "If she walked more and coddled herself less, she would be far better. What am I to do? Toby isn't safe. I suppose I shall have to risk it, though, and send Smith; but, if anything should happen——"

A quick step on the gravel and a loud rat tat on the door startled the doctor.

"Ask him to walk in, Mary," said he, glancing at the card which the trim maid handed to him a moment later.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Leithcote! Are you in need of my services, or have you come to condole with me?"

"Neither, doctor, I assure you! I was not aware that you were on the sick-list. Your old enemy?"

"Yes. Confound this wretched climate of ours!"

"Rank ingratitude, doctor! Have you not often told me that you owed half or at least a third of your patients to rheumatism or cold of one sort or another?"

Doctor Manby smiled grimly.

"I shall owe you a grudge for twitting me with that!" he said.

"I shall take care not to fall into your clutches. Joking apart, though, it is extremely unfortunate that you are ill. I have some friends coming down for a little shooting, and I thought you might like to join us."

"You add to my torment, Mr. Leithcote. If it were not for the gout, the rheumatics might take their chance; a little sport would soon set the blood circulating with its usual vigor. But I can't get a boot on."

"So I see."

"How is the Squire this morning?"

"Fairly for an old boy. He talks seriously of having a shot with us once more. That is pretty fair at eighty-seven—eh, doctor?—thanks to your patching!"

"A good constitution, sir—that's the fact! All the patching in the world wouldn't do on a bad foundation."

"No! But—excuse the question—have you had bad news?" said the young man, noticing the black-bordered envelope.

"Bad news—eh? Well, no—not exactly bad news; such as it is, though, it is a nuisance, coming just now! You see, the mare is knocked up, and I am afraid to trust Smith with Toby."

"Yes—the brute! I shall not forget seeing you careering through the toll-gate that day; I made sure you were in for a broken skull!"

"Good blood, sir; his sire was one of Lord Westbrooke's hunters. But I've brought him under control at last; he doesn't try any of those tricks on me now."

"Is there anything I can do for you, Doctor Manby?" said Mr. Leithcote. "If Toby wants a run, you may trust me to hold him with a tight hand."

"To tell the truth, Mr. Leithcote, I am in an awkward fix. The postman has just brought this letter from my niece, asking me to meet her at Meadowthorpe by the 3.50 train. She is an orphan, a country girl, and has never been out of her native village before. I have never even seen her; but I happen to be her only eligible relative, and they have saddled me with the charge of her. How to fetch her I really don't know."

"The 3.50 train! There is none too much time, doctor; it is half past two already," said Stanley Leithcote, pulling out his watch. "I have business in Meadowthorpe this afternoon; but, if I went back to the hall now, I should not catch that train, and the young lady—Miss——"

"Kelly—Nora Kelly—a schoolgirl—that is, she ought to be one. She is only seventeen; you must not be surprised to find her a complete rustic."

"For that reason it would be all the more cruel to leave her to the mercy of the porters. If you will trust Toby to me, doctor, I will fetch your niece."

"You will place me under an everlasting obligation, Mr. Leithcote. You are sure you do not mind the trouble?"

"Don't mention it! I am only too happy to help you. I must have Toby put to at once, or I shall never do it."

Toby went splendidly. He was fresh, and seemed a little inclined to be restive at first; but Stanley was no tyro with the reins, and the pony soon recognised the fact.

Stanley Leithcote, who was grandson and heir to the old Squire of Leithcote Hall, was six-and-twenty, and had but recently returned from Oxford, where he had done creditably in all respects.

He was usually a very cool and self-possessed young man, but the frequency with which he consulted his watch and smoothed his dark moustache during the drive betrayed an unusual restlessness.

Arrived at the "Bell," he threw the reins to the ostler, leaped to the ground, looked once more at his watch, and, finding that he had a quarter of an hour to spare, transacted the slight business he had to do in the town, and then drove to the railway station.

"He shall identify the damsel?" thought he, as he paced up and down the platform. "I do not even know whether she is fair or dark, tall or short, plain or pretty."

An odd idea struck him at the moment, and he nearly laughed aloud. "Will she believe it?" he wondered, musing over the practical joke he was himself inclined to try. "Nora! Out-and-out Irish—a rosy-cheeked, dark-eyed, snub-nosed little milkmaid, with nothing but her youth to save her from vulgarity!"

There were three minutes to spare before the train was due. Stanley looked into the waiting room. Only a few strangers were there, and he went in and took a hasty survey of himself in the glass.

"Upon my word, it is too absurd! I shall never have the face——"

Clang went the bell. Hurrying out, he made his way to the edge of the platform just as the train drew slowly up.

As he stood watching the windows, a charming face in a first-class carriage passed him—so charming that he forgot all about Nora Kelly and let several compartments go by without a thought of their occupants; it was a face with a pair of lustrous brown eyes and a complexion that a painter or a poet might have raved about. That lovely girl was not the little Irish rustic.

A dozen or more carriages rolled by; the train stopped, eager hands opened the doors, and the passengers began to alight. The necessity for promptitude and a sense of duty roused Stanley Leithcote from his abstraction.

Holding in his hand Nora's letter, which he had brought with him by way of credentials, he hastily pushed his way among the crowd on the platform, eagerly searching for the little rustic Irish girl. She would be in mourning, he supposed. Many of the women he passed had black dresses, but most of them, especially the young ones, wore colored feathers or flowers in their bonnets.

A few strides brought him to the carriage in which he had seen the face that so bewitched him. The fair possessor of it was looking about with an air of perplexity among the passengers.

She was dressed in deep mourning, and appeared much younger now than she had appeared at the carriage window. She seemed to be waiting for some one. But surely she was no unsophisticated rustic—surely she was not Nora Kel——

As he approached her, she caught sight of the letter in his hand, and started forward with a bright smile of recognition.

"Uncle Dick!"

The beautiful face had put to flight all Stanley Leithcote's playful intentions. Had he accosted the heroine of his momentary romance, it would have been in a strain of chivalrous reverence—he would have found it impossible to frame his lips to anything but the truth; but, since fate had taken the matter out of his hands, since she herself had given him the opportunity, he succumbed to the temptation.

"Nora?" he cried interrogatively, putting out his hand.

"Yes—your own little niece, Nora Kelly dear uncle!" said she, giving him an impulsive kiss. "You can't think how glad I am to see you! I thought I should never reach here. Crossing over was the best; it was as rough as rough could be! I love the sea! Don't you, Uncle Dick?"

"Passably," ejaculated the pseudo-uncle, who was recovering from his momentary embarrassment at her affectionate greeting. Stanley was not unduly bashful, but the strangeness of his position and a sense of outraged propriety made him feel a trifle uncomfortable. "Any baggage?"

"I should think so, uncle! Fancy a lady without luggage!"

"Well, come and let us see after it. How much is there?"

"Three great trunks, and two baskets the guard took under his wing."

"Oh, I call that very moderate! So you like to be tossing on the briny deep?"

The vivacious Nora placed her hand within her supposed uncle's arm, and they went off to the luggage van.

"How I shall endure living inland I don't know," she said; "I have always been used to the sea, and I love it so! Oh, that horrible railway journey; I thought it would never end! You will let me go to the seaside often, won't you, Uncle Dick?"

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," answered the young man, smiling.

"You will never guess what is in the baskets," said Nora, looking roguish and confidential.

"Your pet tabby?"

"No, no—I hate cats! I may as well tell you at once. A tame squirrel in one and a Newfoundland puppy in the other! Such a beauty Uncle Dick! I had to give my dear old doggie away. You can't think how I cried on parting with it! Juno and I had been companions almost ever since I was a baby; but they wouldn't let me bring her over. Wasn't it a shame?"

"It was—a barbarous act of tyranny! We must go over and fetch her one of these days."

"Oh, you dear uncle Dick! Will you really? Do you know, you are so different from what I expected—quite different!"

Nora peered into her companion's face in such a frank, bewitching way that Stanley gave her hand an extra squeeze as it nestled on his arm.

"Different, am I? What did you think I should be like?"

"I hardly know—I can't describe exactly—like an uncle—you know what uncles are generally like. But there—I am forgetting all about aunt Eliza! Don't tell her, uncle Dick, please; she might be hurt, you know. She is not in the least like you. Is she quite well?"—this with an air of dutiful contrition.

"I am sorry to say," began young Leithcote, then paused, and, after a while, went on, "She is not very well to-day, I believe, or no doubt she would have come to meet you."

"I suppose old people do have qualms now and then. She is rather old, isn't she, uncle?"

"My dear child," he replied, in as patronizing a tone as he could command, "old age is a malady from which ladies never suffer. Try to bear that in mind. All their ailments are attributable to an unlucky planet or some evil fate."

"I see!"—and Nora nodded significantly. "I'll try not to put my foot in it. You would not believe what scrapes I get into sometimes—I am such an addlepate and

chatterbox! But Aunt Eliza is rather old, isn't she?"

"Don't ask me to solve such a problem. I want you to tell me one thing. Are you disappointed to find me so different from what you expected?"

"Disappointed? Oh, no! Why should I be? Instead of being straitlaced and proper, like aunt Eliza, or grumpy and dignified, like most uncles I have seen, you look good for something, as if there was some fun in you. I shall lead you a fine dance, I can tell you! You will have to go tramping all over the country with me."

The three trunks were brought safely to light at last; and the guard produced the two precious baskets.

Arrangements were made for them all to be sent on, and Nora Kelly and her young "uncle" were soon speeding homewards behind Toby.

Impatient at having had so long to wait, the pony was rather frisky at first; but Nora was not timid, and they whirled along a great deal too fast for Stanley Leithcote, who would willingly have prolonged the ride.

"What will she say when she finds out what a trick I have played her?" was the thought that kept rising in his mind. "Will she be angry?"

She did not look very formidable or very unforgiving; but the longer Stanley reflected the more afraid he became of owning to the deception. The idea of incurring Nora's displeasure made him quite uneasy. He could not fancy a frown on that clear merry brow, especially directed against himself, and for worlds he would not have called one there.

The pony was carrying them homewards fast; within half an hour the joke must come to an end. A dozen times or more he thought he would undeceive her, but had not the heart to do it. It was so sweet to sit and listen to her lively chatter; there was no need yet to put an end to the pleasant familiarity of their tete-a-tete.

"I am very glad you have come," he began, at his wits' end to find something to say that might tell in his favor afterwards.

"Not more glad than I am, uncle dear. At first I thought it would be so dull to live here with you and aunt Eliza! I used to fancy you old an old, old——"

"Fogy, with white hair and spectacles?"

"No—not quite white—iron-gray, like partridge-wool, in streaks. You know what I mean, don't you? Aunt Eliza had a shawl of it when she was in Ireland, she knitted it herself."

"Do you ever knit shawls?" said Stanley, laughing.

"Knit shawls?" repeated Nora, opening her eyes wide in unmistakable amusement, and then breaking into a musical laugh. "You would be horrified if you saw some of my accomplishments. We lived in a place where there was no one to shock, so of course I didn't shock them."

"Then you expect to create a great sensation about here?" As Stanley spoke, Toby shied and set off at a mad gallop. "Sit still—don't be frightened!" said Stanley, leaning back and straightening his legs in a vain endeavor to restrain the pony.

It was a wild stretch of road, along the side of a hill and running downwards all the way. On one side the bank rose almost perpendicularly above them; on the other, it sloped down twenty or thirty feet to a stone-quarry. If the pony kept to the inner side, they would be safe enough; but there were some awkward bends in the road.

If anything should make the animal swerve, or if the dog-cart should get upset, nothing short of a miracle could prevent them from going over the steep embankment. Nora saw and understood the danger.

A thousand thoughts rushed through the young man's brain as Toby flew wildly along. Danger—perhaps death—lay before them. Alone, he might have leaped out and let the trap take its chance; but his charge made him powerless to do more than pull at the reins. He shuddered as he glanced at the fearful declivity on their right. There was just a chance that the pony might carry them by safely; but he could not disguise from himself that they ran a fearful risk.

"Don't be *frightened*!" he repeated, making an effort to reassure his traveling companion. "Toby is sure to keep straight while he is going at this rate."

The words were scarcely uttered however when, whirling round a sharp turn in the road, one of the wheels caught in the overhanging bank, the dog-cart tilted sideways and overturned three or four yards from the corner, while Toby, thus suddenly checked, rolled over the edge of the bank, dragging the cart after him.

Stanley Leithcote, who had fallen on the very brink of the fearful slope, rose and looked anxiously at his companion.

"Nora, my darling, my own darling," he cried, "are you hurt?"

"No, uncle—that is, I don't think I am. Where is Toby?"

"Good heavens, what will Doctor Manby say?" cried the young man, taken off his guard, as he scrambled up and looked over the bank.

There, a few feet down, was Toby, hanging by the harness, the shafts of the trap having caught on a tree-stump.

"The brute will be the death of someone before long, if he doesn't kick the bucket himself now," muttered Stanley; "but we mustn't let him be strangled if we can help it. You are sure you are not hurt?" he said tenderly, helping Nora to rise. "Take care you do not slip!"

Then, with the assistance of two men from the quarry who had seen the accident and hurried to the spot, Stanley cut the harness and liberated the pony. The animal had received only a few trifling bruises; and, after giving the men orders to lead him home and take the damaged trap to his own coach-builder at Meadowthorpe, the young man rejoined Nora, who had nearly recovered from her fright, and was ready, with characteristic buoyancy, to laugh at the ridiculous figure they had cut.

"You are quite sure you are not hurt?" he said rather penitently.

"Not in the least. Are you, uncle Dick? I suppose we shall have to walk the rest of the distance."

"Yes—we have not far to go; but that is not the worst."

Stanley Leithcote looked so serious that his companion's merry smile disappeared for a moment.

"The cart? Yes, I suppose that was damaged; but the coach-builder will soon set it to rights."

"That is not what I mean; the cart is a trifling affair."

"Toby was not much hurt, was he?"

"No; Toby escaped wonderfully well."

"What is the matter, then?" said Nora, perplexed at the strange change that had come over her "uncle," the reserve amounting almost to shyness.

"I scarcely know how to tell you! Nora—Miss Kelly—I have been guilty of a very mean action!"

"What do you mean, uncle Dick? What an awfully long face you pull! What mean action? Surely it cannot be anything so very bad!"

A turn of the road had brought them within sight of Doctor Manby's house, and the terrible disclosure could no longer be postponed.

"I have imposed upon you most unpardonably, Miss Kelly. I am not your uncle."

"You are not Uncle Dick? Who are you, then? Oh, I am so sorry!"

"Are you?"—"Yes—very sorry. Aren't you?"

For the moment, in her surprise, Nora had entirely failed to grasp the situation, and stood staring with lustrous eyes into Stanley's face.

"I am glad," he said, with a comical mixture of contrition and amusement.

"You are only teasing me; it is too bad of you! You do not mean that you are not my uncle Dick?"

"I do indeed! I could not resist the temptation of personating him. I beg your pardon for deceiving you so. Your uncle Dick is almost an old man."

"Uncle Dick an old man!" echoed the disappointed girl. "I am so sorry—so sorry!" And she walked on slowly towards the house.

In Nora's astonishment at Stanley Leithcote's confession, her first feeling had been simple unfeigned regret that, instead of the vigorous companion she had counted on, her uncle was only "like an uncle," after all.

"But, as soon as Stanley had given his version of the incident, expressed his sorrow that it should have happened, and bidden her adieu, her ideas began to assume a new phase, bordering on indignation, and her cheeks burned angrily as she remembered the warmth of her greeting.

"How hot your face looks, my dear!" said Doctor Manby. "I am afraid you are over-tired!"

"Not in the least, uncle; my cheeks are always red!" she answered, shifting her chair so that the curtain shaded her a little.

"Uncle!" The very word made the crimson flush become brighter. How she wished she had not been so forward! She made up her mind to send Mr. Stanley Leithcote to Coventry henceforth and for ever, or—well, for a long, long time!

But, in spite of her threats, in spite of her stern resolves, a few weeks later Nora was sitting with Stanley Leithcote by the brook among the tall elms that were the home of the noisy rooks. She was paler than her wont, and there was a look of sadness on her face.

"He shall never part us, my love, my darling! Nora—I swear it—no one but you shall be my wife!" Stanley said.

Nora's small hand trembled in his.

"Is he so very angry?" she murmured.

"What is his anger to me?" cried the young man. "The estate is mine by right; and, even if he can legally disinherit me as to any part of it—which I doubt—I am young—I will work and provide a home for you by my own exertions! Oh, yes, my darling, I will! He may rob me of the funded property—so much the better for my cousin Percy—but the estate is mine! I shall see our solicitor and inquire into my rights. But I am so grieved that this has come to your ears, my birdie!"

"How did your grandfather find it out?"

"You will never forgive me if I tell you!"

"Not forgive you, Stanley? Make haste, you dreadful tease!"

"You let the cat out of the bag!"

"I? Nonsence, sir! Do not think to impose upon me the second time!"

"It is a fact, darling. Beauvais, grandfather's valet, happened by ill-luck to be at the station; and of course he must needs make capital of his young master's adventure on the platform. You have not forgotten our first meeting, Nora?"

Nora's eyes flashed with mock anger, and then drooped beneath their long lashes.

"You have reminded me of it too often, or I might!"

"I was determined you should not get out of practice," said Stanley, taking his revenge for the little playful satire.

"It is all my fault, then," said Nora, after a pause. "Stanley, you must not suffer for me!"

"No, darling!"

"I will never consent to that."

"To what, dear one?"

"That you should be made miserable on my account."

"I am sure of that, Nora love! And so you will be mine in spite of them all?"

"What did uncle say?"

This question was scarcely audible.

"Oh, he is willing enough if we can only obtain my grandfather's consent!"

Nora's eyes filled with tears.

"What is it, my darling?"

"Why does your grandfather dislike me, Stanley? Is it because my father was an Irish captain?"

"Ever since we were children it has been his pet scheme that I should marry my cousin Caroline to keep our two fortunes in the family. I always did rebel against the idea, even before I saw you, darling; but now—confound the old man's grasping! He will find—"

A sound of horse's hoofs just outside the plantation startled the young couple. Without knowing why, Stanley Leithcote leaped the brook, and, pushing his way through the underwood, clambered up the bank and looked over the fence that skirted the plantation. It was Goodchild the groom riding Stanley Leithcote's own horse at a gallop along the road that led from the park gates.

"Hallo!" shouted Stanley. The man pulled up.

"You're wanted, sir! The Squire had a fit, and I'm going to fetch the doctor!"

Then, without further delay, the groom went on.

The old Squire never spoke again; and two years after his mortal remains were laid among those of his ancestors in the vaults of the old parish church the bells rang out a merry peal as Nora Kelly left the altar, the lady of Leithcote Chase.

TRUTH.—No two minds run in the same channels or think exactly each other's thoughts. Truth is many-sided, and multitudes of men and women stand still, viewing continually but one of her phases. Did they but move around her, changing their respective attitudes, they would appreciate one another far better. Excellent people sometimes regret that there are so many differences of opinion upon a single subject. If all were agreed, they say, how smoothly and harmoniously might all work together for the general good! They forget that, were this possible, there would be no consensus of truth, no gathering together of its many features, no comparison of its many aspects. It is just this mingling of sincere convictions that enables men to correct their fallacies, to retrieve their blunders, to arrive at something like wise judgment and correct conclusions.

Scientific and Useful.

ALUMINUM.—Aluminum heel tips are coming in vogue in England, and bid fair to come into general use. The leather is better protected than in the ordinary manner, and they will not slip on the wooden pavement, which is quite an advantage.

TIME BY TELEPHONE.—The telephone is now employed to give the correct time to subscribers, and even to wake them up in the morning. The operator at the exchange "rings up" the subscribers who desire to be waked at a certain hour. For this purpose it is, of course, necessary that the telephone apparatus and call bell should be placed in the sleeper's bedroom.

SPRAINS.—A simple and efficacious remedy for a sprained wrist is to let cold water run upon it every morning for some minutes, holding the wrist as low beneath the mouth of the tap as possible, so that the water may have a good fall. After this has been done, bandage it tightly, letting the bandage remain until the next ablution. The sprain will be reduced in a few days.

STEEL AND STONE.—An experiment was recently made in Vienna, in order to test the relative existence, under pressure, of the hardest steel and the hardest stone. Small cubes of corundum and of the finest steel were subjected to the test. The corundum broke under the weight of six tons, but the steel resisted up to forty-two tons. The steel split up with a noise like the report of a gun, breaking into powder, and sending sparks in every direction, which bored their way into the machine like shot.

A TELL-TALE FOR BOILERS.—Boilers are apt to explode when there is an insufficient supply of water in them, owing to frost or some other cause stopping the supply pipe, and the "tell-tale" will be useful to householders. The contrivance is simply fixed in a vertical position in the top of the boiler, apart from the flow or other pipes. Before lighting the boiler fire the cock of the tell-tale is turned on, and if water flows from it the boiler is filled; but if not, there is some stoppage in the pipe and the fire must not be lighted.

Farm and Garden.

POTATOES.—Those who use London purple and Paris green on potatoes should be careful and apply only a sufficient quantity for the purpose. The tendency is to use too much, which injures the vines.

PANSIES.—If pansy plants are allowed to produce seed they will soon cease flowering. For that reason the flowers should be clipped off so as to obtain a constant supply. They require rich ground.

MOON.—When bringing new hogs on the farm, or bringing your own from the fairs at which they have been on exhibition, by all means quarantine them for several weeks, lest you will bring to your whole stock germs of the cholera and kindred diseases which may cause you havoc.

CELERY.—A new industry which is receiving encouragement in Germany is that of distilling a strong aromatic oil from the green leaves of the celery plant. A hundred pounds of leaves make one pound of oil. The oil is used for flavoring purposes.

DECLIVITIES.—Valleys, ravines, steep declivities or rocky and broken surfaces might often be given over to a growth of trees, and serve an aesthetic as well as an economic purpose. If land has been reduced to barrenness, or the soil badly washed the fertility is best and most easily restored by a recovering of trees, which restore a vegetable soil.

POULTRY.—Young ducks are most easily raised in small yards. Ducks grow very rapidly in proportion to the food consumed. Nothing tends to engender disease in chickens more than filth in the coops. Too much linseed meal will make the hens too fat, but a small quantity is healthful. One stumbling block with poultry keeping is in attempting to keep too large a number in too small a space. Bran should always be scalded before being fed, as the fowls will relish it much better.

IF YOU HAVE A WORRYING COUGH, or any Lung or Throat trouble, use at once Dr. D. Jayne's Expectorant, and don't parley with what may prove to be a dangerous condition. The best family Pill, Jayne's Painless Sanative.

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On Conversation.

If we mark the snatches of talk that reach us in the street as groups of strollers pass across our zone of hearing, we shall find that in three cases out of four the conversation will be a retailing of conversations that have passed between the speakers and their friends at certain moments which the talker regards as dramatic.

The listener must shape his conception of the scene described out of a mosaic of quotations given in the form of "He says to me," and "I says to him." In no circle of society does conversation play a more important part than among those who make the street their drawing-room. Conversation is the world's one common form of entertainment, irrespective of rank or nationality.

It has been argued that the possession of language marks man off from all the rest of the animals; but the proposition has been disputed by sundry students of animal ways, who would have us believe that animals have modes of communication, in respect of simple ideas, hopes and preferences, which may be counted as a kind of language. But, however that may be, no one, we suppose, will venture to claim for the dumb creation conversational powers used for purposes of delight.

There is an element of the artistic as well as of the useful in conversation; we talk for the sake of interest and agreeableness. It is the greatest brightener of life and relief that the world possesses. Yet the art of conversation is singularly little studied nowadays. There was a time—in the days of frills, wigs and furbelows—when the ability to converse with fluency, dignity and grace was essential to a man or woman of the polite world. That day has passed away so completely that no one talks well except by chance and the light of nature.

Conversation is not monologue. The men who have gained the greatest names in literature as talkers have all been confirmed lecturers. If the man who is full of ideas on nearly every subject that interests mankind, and who pours forth his thoughts lavishly whenever he lets loose his opinion in talk, cannot, owing to his monopoly of the opportunities for speech and his paralysing power over his hearers, be said to enter into conversation with them, much less can the man of one subject be admitted into the ranks of sociable talkers.

There is much well-meant unkindness practised by good-natured people who, when they know a man has a hobby, try to "draw" him on the subject, and so confirm him more and more in his tendency to run in a groove. There are some men whose conversation is very interesting for once—when they are on their favorite theme—but we discover later that the talk which appeared so instructive was only a counterpart of the showman's tale told with the same emphasis to every relay of listeners. Nor is conversation a sort of symposium, where talker follows talker with appropriate comments. Nor yet is it story-telling.

On that point, though, one must tread circumspectly, for far be it from us to say one word in discouragement of the genial story which, more than any other form of utterance, tends to enliven conversation and to cultivate the art of talk. Kept within proper restraint and artistically used, the ability to tell a story to the point neatly, with well-chosen words and cleverly-distributed emphasis, is one of the greatest social recommendations.

Conversation is that blend of talk which is produced when each member of a company says that which he can best say to add to the general pleasure. It is, like football, an instance of combined effort and not of individual prowess. To some extent it is a formality. It is not needed, for example, in love. Where "the lovers go with lingering steps and slow," a brisk fire of talk kept up incessantly would be almost tantamount to a proof of insincerity. Neither do friends always trouble to converse, though in their case they usually can talk well together when they care to take the trouble.

It is when we have got past the diffidence, stiffness, or awkwardness of first acquaintance, and have not yet reached the carelessness of friendship, which is under no compulsion to amuse, that we are in the stage when conversation is most natural. Each member of a company, knowing each other "with a guard between," will put forth his best efforts, and the speakers will strike fire in flashes rather than sustain the steady blaze of monologue. It is not depth or solidity of learning or thought which is in request so much as readiness of resource.

Portability rather than extent of knowledge serves in conversation, and aptitude is the prime qualification. What better accompaniment to hospitality can there be than the power of drawing out the thoughts of guests in an easy way, removing the barriers behind which spirit fences itself against spirit, and fostering the free circulation of ideas which otherwise might lie unexpressed, or perhaps only partly developed, in the mind of their originator?

To be the cause of conversation is at least as noteworthy as to converse, and many an adroit hostess contributes more by the regulation of the talk than the most brilliant wit can claim as the result of all his sallies. Do men or women shine most as conversationalists? It would be only a partial view which gave the palm unreservedly to men, for, while they often excel in the value of the information they scatter, in the quality of their humor, and in the sparkle and finish of their style, it is women whose management makes the most of the social materials at hand.

The ideal company must be mixed. Women left to talk alone do not, as a rule, cultivate the art of conversation to much purpose. Their intercourse too often runs to gossip as soon as it has ceased to busy itself with practical details; the place of conversation in sustaining human happiness is often inadequately realised by them.

If the marriageable girl, about whom we hear so much, once saw how immeasurably a woman adds to her attractions when she is a clever talker, there would soon be more care given to the art of conversation than to such mechanical accomplishments as piano-playing or to the material fripperies of robing the figure.

Plain girls often marry because they are entertaining; they show their qualities in their talk. The husband thinks of the long years when he will need companionship and brightness, and the varied and judicious talker answers to his fancy. As a rule, however, it is the man who shines most in serious conversation, for his experience is wider.

It is requisite that one should have lived with men, and should have known their ways and characteristics, as well as to have acquired knowledge, if conversation is to be used with masterly skill and as a means of finding and giving pleasure. But there is no reason why every man and woman should not, by a little attention to the niceties of conversation, add enormously to the common fund of human happiness. It does not need much learning to be an interesting talker, but neatness of execution and an artistic adaptability.

Emerson has pointed out that sincere and happy conversation doubles our powers. Every variety of gift, he says—science, religion, politics, letters, art, war and love—has its best exchange in conversation. But let us not be mistaken in our appreciation of this delightful accomplishment. It does not follow that we can all ever hope to converse with the grace and charm which we admire.

Some must be content to be tongue-tied in company, like Nathaniel Hawthorne, who, clever as he was, envied the people whom he heard chattering freely to each other in the street, and who consoled himself when in company with the delightful thought of the inconceivable number of places where he was not. No—the power of entertaining and artistic talk is not to be easily gained, and those who have it ought daily to feel grateful for their gift, as their acquaintances are grateful for its exercise.

WHAT is our character? Is it not the sum and result of our thoughts, feelings and actions? What is our life? Is it not a structure built up of all that we have said and done and experienced? This character, says a living writer, we ourselves have formed; this life we ourselves have built up by the action and reaction of our deeds. The character, when finished, passes beyond our control, and exerts its own influence independent of our active wishes and efforts. But we ourselves had the forming of it by a series of thoughts, words and deeds, over which, at the time, we had complete control. We cannot help the silent influence which our character, when formed, produces; but we are responsible for the formation of it.

THE drafts drawn by indolence upon the future are pretty sure to be dishonored. Make "Now" your banker. Do not say you will economize presently, for presently you may be bankrupt. Begin at once. Now is the time. Each present sacrifice makes future ones easier. The selfish man's weakness cannot be overcome by him if he does not fight it at once. Do not think that you will repent and make atonement presently, for presently you may be judged. Bear in mind the very important fact, taught alike by the history of every nation, all rulers and private individuals, that in at least three cases out of five presently is too late.

THE innocence which is founded on ignorance must inevitably melt away with the access of knowledge, like snow in the rays of the sun; and, if there is nothing more substantial to take its place, if there is no positive support of firm principle and sterling virtue in the mind and heart of the youth as he steps into manhood, there is little hope for his future. The knowledge of the world and the ability to deal with it should progress together, if the youth is to develop into a noble man.

NOTHING can more thoroughly secure the harmony and peace of the family circle than the habit of making small sacrifices one for another. Children thus learn good manners in the best and most natural way, and habits thus acquired will never leave them. Courtesy and kindness will never lose their power or charm, while all spurious imitations of them are to be despised.

CONFIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENTS.

S. N. H.—We do not know the island you refer to, but there are several in the West Indies which have been spoken of as desirable places for the United States to purchase with a view to being provided with a military base of supplies in that neighborhood.

G. V. R.—The proverb "we never miss the water till the well runs dry," is generally applied to improvident people, who go on spending their money while it lasts, without reflecting that a time may soon come when they will want every farthing they squander.

R. F.—It was Macaulay who said, in speaking of the Papacy we think, that it would be flourishing when a New Zealander came over in a balloon, and alighted on a broken arch of London-bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's. The illustration is not wholly original. Something very like it occurs in Horace Walpole's writings.

M. M.—The Jungfernstieg (The Maiden's Walk) is a fashionable promenade in the city of Hamburg, Germany. It is the broad walk round the sides of a basin of water formed by damming up the small river Alster. In the summer season the river is covered with brightly painted boats, and the scene in the immediate vicinity is one of much animation and gaiety.

JESSE.—Bible is the name given by St. Chrysostom in the fourth century to that collection of sacred writings recognized by Christians as the documents of their divinely-revealed religion. It is derived from the Greek biblion, diminutive of biblos, a book, from byblos, the papyrus, or the inner bark of it, which was made into paper for books.

R. Y.—Egypt may not be the "oldest country on the face of the globe," but—where is the proof to the contrary? Its civilization goes so far back into the past that Egyptologists reckon its eras by dynasties, and assume that 17,000 years before Christ all the Upper Nile region was teeming with population, and numerous great cities, with vast public buildings, temples, etc., were then in existence.

E. M.—The opera of "Robert le Diable" was composed by Meyerbeer in 1828. "Robert the Devil" was the hero of an old French metrical romance of the thirteenth century. Having been given over, as the legend tells, to the care of his satanic majesty before his birth, he ran a career of unparalleled crime and cruelty till he was miraculously reclaimed, did penance by living among the dogs, became a shining light, and at last married the emperor's daughter. In the fourteenth century this romance was turned into prose, and of the prose story two translations were made into English. Robert, the first Duke of Normandy, was known by the same title as the hero mentioned above, on account of the similarity of the two characters.

RHODA.—There are many ways of obscuring glass, some of the plans making the glass permanently frosted, others only temporarily so. For permanence, take a flat piece of marble, dip it into glass-cutters' sharp sand, moistened with water; rub over the glass, dipping frequently in sand and water. If the frosting is required very fine, finish off with emery and water. As a temporary frosting for windows, mix together a strong hot solution of Epsom salts and a clear solution of gum arabic; apply warm. Or use a strong solution of sulphate of soda, warm; and when cool, wash with gum water. Or dab the glass with a lump of glazier's putty, carefully and uniformly, until the surface is equally covered. This is an excellent imitation of ground glass, and is not disturbed by rain or damp.

READER.—The expression, "The sick man of the East," is applied as a general thing to the Turkish Empire, which under Soliman the Magnificent (1495-1566) reached the zenith of its glory, and has ever since steadily declined. At the present day, Turkey is mainly dependent upon the support of foreign powers. The expression is said to have originated with Emperor Nicholas of Russia. In a conversation with Sir George Seymour, he is credited with saying: "We have on our hands a sick man—a very sick man," etc. The minutes of this and other conversations between the Emperor and Sir George Seymour were laid before Parliament by the English ministry in the course of the debates that immediately preceded the declaration of war against Russia, and the expressive appellation, "sick man of the East," was taken up and circulated by the press until it became an established sobriquet when referring to Turkey.

M. Y.—The derivation of the word primer is said to be from Latin, liber primarius, a little book containing the offices of the Catholic Church, so called because used at prime—prima hora—the first hour. It was originally a small book of prayers, but at the present time an elementary reading book of the lowest grade. The literature relating to primers, or A-B-C books, is very curious and interesting, some of these books having had great fame on account of their long and extensive use. One of the very earliest was Luther's "Child's Little Primer," containing the Lord's Prayer, etc. In 1534, a "Prymer in Englysshe with certain prayers," was printed by John Byddell; in 1543, King Henry VIII. ordered an English "Form of Public Prayer, or Primer," to be printed, and to be "taught, learned, and red" throughout his dominions. Bienrod's Primer, containing an illustrated alphabet, was the earliest publication of this kind in German, dating back to the middle of the sixteenth century.

THE KINDEST FRIEND.

BY S. T.

A flow'rless mound; an ancient stone
Whereon the tender moss hath grown,
Half hiding words graved long ago—
"Death, whom we all evade and flee,
Hath proved the kindest friend to thee."
And yet this Life is sweet, we know.

Our day run by in even groove;
We have our homes, the work we love;
And, e'en should heavy loss befall,
'Tis but a shadow o'er the sky.
Too soon our griefs, our tears are dry;
The warmth of Life absorbs them all.

Yet, howsoever warm and sweet
Were Life, with ev'ry joy complete,
Death comes but as our kindest friend
To fold us in oblivion ere
Our fortunes change, our homes grow bare,
Our high ambition hath an end.

So, when some friend whom we would keep
Or child beloved is laid to sleep,
Let us say bravely in our turn—
"The way is long; we will not grieve
That they were called so soon to leave
The tasks we find so hard to learn!"

A Double Want.

BY L. J.

IT was snowing hard. All day long the wind had blown roughly, while now and then a solitary snowflake had found its way to the narrow ledge outside the schoolroom window.

Now, at five o'clock, there was snow everywhere—on the square grass-plot before the large bay-window, and on the row of shrubs which divided the lawn from the orchard that lay behind.

The view from the schoolroom at Charlton Manor was dreary at all times, but was doubly so this wild March afternoon, as Muriel Heynes stood, with her face pressed anxiously against the window-pane, looking for a lithe figure which came not, longing for the eager loving greeting which was to-day so long delayed.

"Poor old Jack," she whispered—"poor darling! I wonder why it is you do not come?"

And then, perhaps because little Louise had been a trifle fractious over her music lesson, or possibly because the Fieldings' son and heir had raised urgent objections to learning the ever-detested multiplication table, the little governess sighed dolefully, and, turning from the window, sought the one luxurious chair the room contained. She pushed the soft hair from her brow, and gazed into the fire with sombre brown eyes that tried hard to look brave and hopeful.

"I am a silly little goose of a girl!" she said severely. "Jack always says so—and of course he knows! I am lonely and dull and wretched, and should love to have a good cry all to myself; but I won't—no, I won't! I won't even think of home and of all the dear faces, and how I long to see them again!

"I won't recall, even for a moment, Mrs. Fielding's superior smile of scorn when she saw poor Jack squeeze my hand before breakfast this morning in his impulsive reckless fashion. No—I'll think of Jack instead, and of the lovely times we've had together since he came home and first fell in love with me. Can it be only three months ago? Poor old Jack, how I wonder——"

But Muriel's wonderment ended in blissful oblivion. Three minutes later her soft cheek rested upon the cushion of the old arm-chair, and the object of her waking thoughts became the hero of her happy dreams.

Thus Jack found her. He came up the lawn from the avenue, whistling softly, with his eyes fixed upon the schoolroom window. A minute later he entered the room, and, without waiting to shake the snow from his coat, he stood by the fireside, looking lovingly at the little face which had in fancy been present with him all through the day.

"Sweetheart—sweetheart!" he said; and kneeling beside her, he put his arms around her and dispelled her dreams with fond loving kisses.

"Oh, Jack," she cried, with a tired little sigh, her head upon his shoulder, her hand in his—"oh, Jack, it's been such a long, long day without you! I thought you weren't coming. I've watched at the window so long! And there's a dinner-party to-night; and I think Mrs. Fielding is angry with me, for I have not been asked to go down. But I don't care now—not a bit!"

"Don't you?" he said, kissing her again and smiling.

Jack Horner was below the middle height, and of a slight figure that showed to advantage in the saddle or in the ball-room; he was fair, with a crop of short chestnut curls that gave him an exceedingly boyish appearance.

For the rest, he had a pleasant fair-complexioned countenance, lighted up by a pair of fine blue eyes—beautiful eyes they were, too, constituting Jack's sole claim to beauty—and a slight moustache which partially concealed his merry expressive mouth.

Jack was a prime favorite with the fair sex—less perhaps on account of his good looks than for his invariably amiable and light-hearted disposition and his kindly courteous manner.

Little Jack Horner—a title which, it being his own name, Jack had no power to change, even had he wished to do so—was the son of Mrs. Fielding by her first marriage.

And Jack had often owned to himself that he was a lucky fellow when, on his father's death, at the age of eighteen, Gustave Horner, an uncle on the paternal side and a wealthy manufacturer, had expressed his intention of adopting him.

In the lad's own words, he had ever since lived "in clover;" and thus it came about that, although Charlton Manor was only about fifty miles from Leeds, where his uncle lived, Jack had fallen out of the way of seeing much of his step-father's family until quite recently.

An attack of typhoid fever during the autumn had however reduced him to such a state of weakness and prostration that Gustave Horner, in a fit of good humor, had bidden him "be off to his mother, and kick up his heels for two or three months in the country."

Jack had demurred at first; but his uncle's stronger will finally prevailed, and he came to stay with the Fieldings in order to recruit his strength. He had arrived at Christmas, and March found him still at Charlton Manor, the life and soul of the household, and Muriel's hero.

"Darling," said little Jack Horner suddenly, as Muriel nestled closely to his side, "I suppose you know that all our good days will soon be over—that soon—confound it!—I shall be going away?"

"Going away?" Muriel echoed dismally; and, looking tenderly at her, Jack met the gaze of a pair of soft brown eyes full of tears.

"Darling," he pleaded, don't cry! Don't waste a single tear on me—I'm not worth it. You see, Muriel, we've drifted on and on until we feel we can't do without each other any longer; and what on earth we are to do I don't know!

"You know, my sweet, I'm a lucky dog; but I'm not my own master, and I can't forget which side my bread's buttered. It seems callous and cruel to talk of such things in connection with my pretty sweetheart; but how else—— Oh, little love, you make my heart ache when you cry like this!"

Muriel dried her eyes obediently. She was only twenty-one, a warm-hearted sensitive girl; who had left her own poverty-stricken family in a Devonshire vicarage to earn her living amongst strangers. And Jack's love and solicitude for her had made her the happiest girl in Christendom.

The haunting fear of Jack's departure had of late made her appear sorrowful and distraite, so that he had noticed the change in his little sweetheart, although he had never broached the subject until to-day.

Sitting there, hand in hand in the firelight, he felt what a fool he had been—and worse than a fool. For the sake of a brief flirtation with a young and pretty girl he had bartered his own piece of mind and plunged Muriel into grief and sorrow.

He pictured his uncle's contemptuous scorn when his nephew's folly should come to his knowledge, his scathing ridicule at the idea of a young man in his right mind, with the world before him, sacrificing his prospects in life at five-and-twenty for love of a pair of wistful brown eyes.

Jack colored at the thought, and half involuntarily released the little hand he held in his. What a fool he had been! Some words of his uncle's occurred to him—words at which he had laughed at the time.

"Steer clear of the women, my lad," the old man had said. "Love all of 'em, or love none. Remember this, you've to make a good match or none at all, and that not until you're my partner, in another five years' time." And Muriel was by his side, a tear from her bonny blue eyes even now lying upon his hand!

"Confound it!" Jack cried bitterly, and, rising, released the girl from his arms and regarded her critically. "Why are you so pretty?" he exclaimed. "Don't you know that I'm tied hand and foot—that I'm a veritable slave to a money-grubbing old idiot who is a world too good to me? There—forgive me, darling; I'm almost out of my mind with grief to-night! One thing I do know, and that is that no one on earth shall make me give you up!"

"Hush!" Muriel said warningly; and, turning, Jack saw in the doorway a tall aristocratic-looking man holding little Louise in his arms.

"Oh, here you are, Horner!" he said, advancing to the fireside, his eyes resting admiringly upon Jack's companion. "I've come to restore a little truant to this lady. Introduce me, will you?"

"Miss Heynes—Mr. Langdon," Jack muttered in by no means his usually genial tones, feeling irritated at being compelled to present this wealthy and fascinating friend to shy little Muriel. "Come, Louise—you've kept Miss Heynes waiting for her tea. I say, Langdon, the sooner we fellows clear out the better!"

"Oh, Miss Heynes," cried golden-haired Louise eagerly, "Mr. Langdon wants to hear you sing, and mama has promised to ask you to dine with them to-night! Oh, do, Miss Heynes dear! And wear your pretty white dress—the one that Jack likes so much, you know! You will, won't you?"

"Don't refuse," Frederic Langdon pleaded, smiling, and thinking what an innocent charming face the little governess had.

Muriel lost no time in making her decision.

"Thanks; I will not come down to dinner to-night, I think," she said courteously. "Louise, you may tell Mrs. Fielding I have a slight headache, and would rather remain here; but, since she wishes it, I will sing during the evening." Then, with a nod and smile of dismissal to the two men, she approached the tea table and deliberately turned her back on them.

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It was ten o'clock, and Muriel had long since left the drawing-room. Feeling restless and disinclined for sleep, she resolved to forget her troubles in a thrilling novel which Jack had lent her the day before, and which was lying upon the library table.

Muriel crept softly down stairs, entered the library, and was about to return with her book when she heard a footstep in the hall. Ah, how well she knew that light firm tread!

Recalling Mrs. Fielding's unfriendly demeanor during the evening, in a sudden fit of shyness and dread she looked around her hastily for somewhere to hide. By the time Jack entered the room Muriel had hidden herself safely in the curtained recess near the book-shelf, where she listened anxiously for the sounds of his departure.

But Jack had no intention of departing; and Frederic Langdon hurried into the room almost immediately after Jack, and closed the door.

"Now out with it!" Muriel's lover cried wrathfully, as he flung himself impetuously into a chair. "You are primed, of course, by mother—hence these hints and innuendoes!"

"Be reasonable, my dear boy," his friend said soothingly; "believe me, Mrs. Fielding has your welfare at heart, as I have. But I object to seeing you play fast and loose with such a charming creature as the one up-stairs. Tell me, Jack, on the strength of our long friendship, are your intentions towards the girl strictly honorable?"

"I fail to understand," Jack began, springing to his feet; but, as he saw only solicitude in the handsome face before him, his wrath died away, and a great longing for sympathy and friendly advice came over him. "Fred," he said humbly, "what the deuce am I to do in the matter?"

"You wish to marry her?" Langdon queried, with ill-concealed incredulity.

"I would marry her to-morrow," Jack cried eagerly, his face aglow with enthusiasm—"marry her just as she is, without a penny in her pocket, and be glad of the chance! Bt there's Uncle Gus——"

"He would object, you imagine?"

"Object!" Jack laughed derisively. "He'd turn me out neck and crop, and call me a fool for my pains. You know that as well as I do."

"In that case," Langdon observed meditatively yet decisively—"in that case, my dear boy, you will have to relinquish the idea."

"I know it!" cried Jack. "I am perfectly aware that I have been a ridiculous fool, and had better be kept under restraint for the rest of my days. I tell you I love Muriel as I shall never love another woman all my life, but I would rather throw myself into the nearest river than requite my uncle's generosity by marrying against his will."

"In these circumstances," continued Frederic Langdon, still in the same calm convincing way, "Mrs. Fielding considers it unwise of you to continue your attentions to Miss Heynes. It is behaving badly to the girl, you know, Jack."

"In these circumstances," Jack said, bitterly sarcastic—"circumstances which are unfortunately entirely beyond my control—what do you and my mother advise me to do?"

In her retreat, with dilated eyes and a heart well-nigh breaking, Muriel waited with grief and suspense for the few cold words about to issue from Langdon's lips.

"To put it briefly, Jack," he said, with cruel distinctness, "you must drop her."

Drop her! Drop Muriel! Put out of his heart, out of his life the lovely presence of the girl he had learned to love! Jack laughed, a loud, mocking, heart-breaking laugh, and, rising, walked unsteadily to the door.

"So be it, old fellow!" he said bitterly, and slammed the door behind him.

Muriel crept from her hiding-place and advanced to where Frederic Langdon lay back in his chair, a cigar between his lips. It was a pale-faced sorrowful eyed Muriel who regarded him with wistful earnestness.

"Miss Heynes!"

"Yes—it is I," she answered, her voice a little tremulous, although her eyes did not waver. "I—I heard all you said, Mr. Langdon; I was there—near the book-shelf!"

"I am heartily sorry to hear it," he said kindly, rising at once and offering her his chair; "it must have pained you horribly, knowing as I do that you return Jack's regard! My poor child, I fear that foolish boy has led you into much sorrow!"

She looked so lovely in her simple evening dress, so young, so desolate, that Langdon, man of the world and cynic though he was, could not help feeling some pity for her. "You must be brave," he said hurriedly—"for Jack's sake, you know, Miss Heynes! Poor lad—he is scarcely himself to-night!"

"I know," she returned simply. "Mr. Langdon, you are his friend, you know all about him, and his—prospects. Is it entirely out of the question for him to think of marrying me?"

"I fear so," Langdon answered.

"Then," she said quickly, a bright color suffusing her pale cheeks, "I will show him his duty, and—drop him."

"Forgive me," Langdon said, with sudden contrition; "it was brutal—unpardonable——"

"No," Muriel interposed sweetly—"it was kind. You are Jack's best friend, and I believe that you wish his welfare. I—I wanted to tell you that I care for him too much to encourage his folly. You will not betray me?"

"Never!"

"Thank you," she said, blushing faintly. "I think he leaves next week, and I shall not see him again. Good-night, Mr. Langdon!"

"Good night," he rejoined, clasping firmly the hand she held out to him—"good night! Try to forgive me for what I can never forgive myself." He opened the library door, and watched her as she crossed the hall and passed up the staircase, a lovely dainty figure, with her fair head held erect and her face composed.

But, when she had gained the privacy of her own room, Muriel's self-control broke down. She drew from its hiding-place a little photograph, which was the only thing she possessed to remind her of a dream that was over and gone—Jack, stiff, solemn-faced, an apology for his handsome brilliant self—yet Jack in spite of all—and, as she gazed at it, the tears ran down her cheeks and fell upon Jack's pictured face, beneath which he had scrawled in bold round-hand—

"To darling Muriel—From little Jack Horner."

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Muriel did not see Jack again—that is, she did not meet him face to face, although they sat daily at the same table. It is true that Jack's longing eyes seldom left Muriel's pale little face during the short time he spent in her society; but his lady-love was obdurate, and carried out the "dropping" admirably, in Frederic Langdon's opinion.

Mrs. Fielding grew friendly again, and fussed over Jack in a manner rather distasteful to him in the circumstances. He was wretched and miserable, and a prey

to the conviction that he had merited and obtained Muriel's righteous condemnation and scorn: whereas the girl he loved, although very unhappy, had no feeling save that of compassion towards her luckless lover. Thus the days went by, until Jack's time was up; and one morning the children came to lessons with grief-stricken faces and swollen eyes.

"Jack is going this morning!" they cried. "Oh, dear, Miss Heynes, Jack is going back to that horrid hateful old Leeds, and we shall all be miserable without him!"

"Going back to Leeds!" Muriel repeated, her face growing pale; and forthwith she bestowed upon the weeping Louise a shower of kisses.

At eleven o'clock the door opened and Jack entered. His face was woeful-looking, and his manner reckless and uncertain. Snatching up Louise in his arms, he kissed her again and again, while Master Hubert Fielding set up a howl at the thought of the approaching separation, but was speedily silenced by the half-crown which found its way into his chubby palm. Jack then turned to Muriel, who was watching him, not a tear dimming her beautiful eyes.

"Good-bye," he said, seizing her hand and wringing it fiercely, to relieve the pain which racked his heart—"good-bye! You will forget me, of course! Better so, perhaps. As for me——"

"No," she said very softly, looking into his face, "I never forget—never! I am true always to my own heart. Good-bye!"

But when Louise raised her head as she heard the door close, and broke out into a piteous cry of "Jack, Jack!" to her amazement, she saw that Muriel's eyes were filled with tears.

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"From Jack Horner, Leeds, to Frederic Langdon, Exeter.—Come as soon as convenient. I want you."

This was the telegram which had brought Langdon in haste to the house of his friend's uncle, Gustave Horner, about a year after Jack had bidden Muriel farewell in the schoolroom at Charlton Manor.

"I want you," the spoiled boy had said; and his wish had been instantly gratified by the clever far-seeing man of the world, who was ten years Jack's senior and his most intimate friend.

"It was awfully good of you," Jack cried, in a transport of gratitude, when the two men were alone for the first time on the evening of Langdon's arrival; "but I guessed you'd come! You always were a brick, old man! And now what do you think I want you for?"

"Can't imagine; but not another affaire-de-cœur, I should hope, this time!" Langdon responded coolly, glancing somewhat curiously at the radiant countenance of his friend.

"Certainly not another!" Jack said promptly. Then, striding over the carpet, he seized Langdon's hand and gave it a hearty shake, which greatly astonished that laconic young man. "Rejoice with me, Fred, old man!" Jack cried, with enthusiasm. "You see before you the happiest man in Europe—bar none! The uncle's a brick, and I am a lucky dog, as I have always been! Do you know you're shaking paws with the junior partner in the flourishing firm of Horner & Co.—and, what's better, with the prospective husband of the dearest little girl in Devonshire—bless her?"

"Really!" Frederic Langdon murmured, disguising admirably his astonishment and disgust. "Dear me—quite—quite romantic! My dear Jack, pray enlighten me further!"

"Jolly, isn't it?" queried Jack, laughing. "The old boy's come out splendidly! Says he's entirely satisfied with me, and will overlook the slight deficiency in age in consequence of my being a youth after his own heart. On the strength of the compliment I ventured to throw out a hint about Muriel—only a hint, mind you—but, wonderful to relate, it wasn't half unfavorably received.

"I fancy the idea of our hopeless separation for the twelve months touched a chord in his kind old heart; but I feared pressing the matter further, and let it drop. But now—— Oh, Fred, help me out! Say you'll do me another good turn, and plead my cause with the governor! He thinks all the world of you and of your opinion. You'll not refuse?"

"Let me clearly understand," said Langdon, after a pause. "Your desire to make Muriel Heynes your wife is the same as when you left her a year ago? Of course you have sufficient grounds for imagining that the lady herself has remained constant?"

"If you mean," Jack blurted out hotly—"does my little girl love me now as she did then?—I say 'Yes!' I have never doubted her, and I never will doubt her! She said she would never forget me; and, although I have not seen her since, my belief in Muriel's truth and sincerity is unshaken. Fred, you will do as I ask?"

"Unfortunately, my dear boy," Langdon replied distinctly, yet with evident reluctance, "your request is horribly inconsistent, and to grant it would be doubly so! Only three days ago I proposed to Miss Heynes, and was accepted."

The glad light faded from Jack's bright young face. With a trembling hand he pushed the curls from his brow and strove to appear calm.

"You?" was all he said.

"She was probably tired of the hopelessness of your suit," Langdon continued. "Why, you yourself gave her sufficient reason for believing it hopeless! I do not think you can blame her, Jack, if you consider the matter calmly, or me for being unable to resist her beauty and charm.

"Truthfully, I supposed your idea of marrying her was a thing of the past; and I don't mind confessing to you that I have cared for her since the time I spent at the Manor last spring. Miss Heynes left Mrs. Fielding's house three months ago, as you are probably aware, and has since remained at home. During that time I have seen her frequently."

"And of course she could not refuse you!" Jack cried with intense bitterness. "You were free as air, rolling in money, and with no shadow of an obstacle in your way. Oh, yes—I see plenty of excuse for her, young, inexperienced, lonely as her position has been! I do not blame her—not I!"

He rose and looking down at Langdon's handsome face, which was but slightly disturbed by the difficulties of his awkward position, while a fierce fire smouldered in the depths of his blue eyes.

With a sudden impulse the elder man laid his hand upon Jack's arm.

"You will not try to see her—to approach her, Jack?" he asked earnestly.

"Have no fear," responded Jack, with undisguised scorn. "You have won her; may you be happy! All I have to do henceforth is to forget her—and speedily. Only remember this"—and, despite his efforts at composure, his voice trembled—"no forgetfulness on my part can bridge over this severance of our friendship! My duties to a guest I will surely fulfil; but the hand of Muriel Heynes' accepted lover I cannot—will not—clasp in mine!"

So saying, he walked straight from the room, leaving his guest to his own unenviable reflections.

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About two months later, when the country was fair with May flowers and May sunshine, Frederic Langdon made his way to the small Devonshire village that was Muriel's home.

He had refrained from seeing her for more than six weeks, and Muriel had grieved over his absence in her quiet undemonstrative way, for she had grown both to esteem and admire him, and thoroughly appreciated her friendship with a man of Frederic Langdon's capacity and artistic tastes. She blushed sweetly as she ran down the verandah-steps to meet him.

"Come," he said, his greeting over—"I have much to say to you; and your romantic old garden looks positively tempting this beautiful afternoon! Come for a little stroll with me; and tell me all you have been doing since I saw you last."

So she narrated in the simple unaffected manner which was to him her most potent attraction the trifling events of her somewhat monotonous daily life, while Langdon watched her as the sunlight played upon her fair uncovered head and was reflected in the depths of her velvety eyes. But her smiles were a little forced, and her girlish conversation lacked its accustomed merriment. Langdon's brow contracted as she became silent.

"You are pale," he said kindly, "and your eyes are not so bright as usual. Tell me what ails you little one!"

"Nothing," she said, with lamentably-assumed nonchalance; and then her eyes straightway sought Langdon's, and she cried inconsistently, with a nervous little tremor in her voice, "Mr. Langdon, you are Jack's friend—please tell me whether the report is true that Mr. Horner has taken him into partnership! Louise wrote to me last week and mentioned it."

"Oh, dear, yes! Jack has been a partner for quite three months. I was at Leeds a few weeks back, and he himself told me of his good fortune. Lucky boy. He has a prosperous future before him!"

"You saw him?" Muriel cried breathlessly. "And he is a partner; and he didn't say——"

Langdon took the girl's hands gently in his.

"He was looking very happy and prosperous, and quite his old merry self," he told her, "and is a very big man now in every one's estimation. Oh, yes—he mentioned you in the course of conversation—and he hoped you were quite well, and that you would be very happy when the time came for you to be married, if you were not married already! And only this morning," Langdon continued cheerfully, tapping his coat-pocket, "I had a note from old Gus Horner himself—a very good friend of mine.

"He speaks highly of Jack's business capacities, and says he is like a son to him. And what specially delights the old fellow is that his nephew frequently expresses his intention of following in his uncle's footsteps and avoiding matrimony. Oh, yes, Jack is a very lucky fellow—there's no doubt about that; but he's a sad flirt—a very sad flirt!"

Muriel stood beside him, her lips quivering slightly and her beautiful eyes brimming over with tears. So sweet was she, and withal so sorrowful, that Langdon flung prudence and restraint to the winds and clasped her in his arms.

"My darling, my darling," he whispered, with deep tenderness and compassion, "the desire of my heart is to shield and protect you, the one aim of my life to win you for my own! Child, listen! I will be patient, and wait until you bid me claim you; only raise your sweet eyes, Muriel, and tell me that my hope is not destined to be a vain one!"

Muriel's eyes sought his.

"You?" she said sorrowfully, almost as poor Jack had uttered it in his pain and despair; and, gently disengaging herself from his embrace, she walked swiftly away from him down the garden-path.

Frederic Langdon looked after her and smiled, for he believed that his cause was won.

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Pentulloch, a charming seaside resort on the Welsh coast, was crowded, and its visitors were revelling in the exquisite summer weather, which was warm without being sultry.

One visitor, whose white cotton gown displayed to advantage the curves of her pretty figure, while the sweet mobile face beneath the small sailor-hat was both youthful and lovely, was perched on a high green bank overlooking the little bay, regarding the beautiful scene below her with a mournful lack of appreciation; her lips quivered, and her brown eyes were tearful.

"I hate the very thought of it," she said petulantly—"indeed, it's sober truth! And yet, in four weeks' time, this fascinating well-to-do man will be my lawful lord and master, and I shall have said 'Good-bye' for ever to freedom and happiness—and Jack! Oh, Jack dear, it was cruel of you to give me up so easily!"

At this moment her reflections were interrupted by a cry—

"Oh! Ah! Oh, dear! Oh—will nobody ever come?"

It was about seven o'clock in the evening, and the girl in the white gown appeared to be the only wanderer among the rocks.

"What is it? Where are you? I'm coming! Don't be afraid!" she responded shrilly, running at full speed down the little incline. When she reached the bottom, she found a little old gentleman, of a plump rosy countenance, lying in a helpless posture. He was clad in a gray tweed suit, and a soft hat and stick lay at a little distance from their unfortunate owner.

"What's the matter?" Muriel cried, aghast. "Are you ill, or in pain, or what?"

"I believe I've broken both my legs!" the sufferer groaned faintly. "Oh, no—you can't help me; but for goodness' sake don't go away! I've been here for hours!"

"Both your legs?" Muriel cried, with difficulty repressing a smile. "Oh, it's impossible! Why, you would be dying of pain!"

"I feel that I am," sighed the little old gentleman helplessly. "Don't laugh, young lady, or I may shock you! I've had a fall—a severe fall—and every bone in my body feels fractured. As for my foot——"

"It is sprained, I fancy," the girl said sympathetically, kneeling beside him and regarding him with serious brown eyes. "But indeed you are not hurt so much as you imagine. Men always take fright at a trifling disaster—not that your accident is trifling, but you must not give up in this way. It is getting late, and there's not a soul on the rocks—every one is at the concert on the New Parade. And it's a half-hour's walk to the town, and not easy traveling either. I wonder what we'd better do?"

"I'm a fool," the rosy-faced gentleman said impatiently—"the biggest fool at large, and that's saying a good deal! I'd no business at sixty-five to be racing and scampering up mountain heights as though I was a boy! Look here, young lady—suppose you were to shout with all the strength you've got, and ascertain whether there's a human creature within ear-shot? Open your mouth well, and fancy there's a mad bull at your heels. Ah, that's famous!"—as Muriel's bell-like "Halloo!" rang out on the clear air.

A moment later a shock-headed urchin made his appearance on the scene, looking very curious and awe-struck.

At the old gentleman's request, Muriel directed the lad to the Grand Hotel, with an order for a cab to be brought up the drive as near as possible to the scene of the accident, with sufficient helpers to remove the sufferer.

"And don't forget to hurry up, lad!" the old man pleaded earnestly. "They know me at the 'Grand,' for I'm staying there; and just tell them that, if they're here in double-quick time, I'll treble the fare. Old Gus Horner may be a fool, but he's a good way off being bankrupt!"

The lad, duly impressed, hastened away on his errand, and Muriel sank down upon the rocks with a face as colorless as her gown. Gus Horner! Old Gus Horner! She looked with a new interest at the fat little gentleman at her feet.

His face was queer but kindly, his scanty hair curly and white, his whole appearance remarkably comical and interesting; but his eyes—— They were Jack's eyes—blue as the heavens, honest as the day—and as Muriel gazed at them she felt as though she could fall upon her knees and kiss the round rubicund face of Jack's severe uncle.

"I feel desperately stiff," Mr. Horner remarked, with a sigh; "and it's none too easy a couch, this of mine. Ay, that's better!"—as Muriel seated herself upon the short grass and drew his head gently upon her lap, while she pondered how she might glean tidings of the man who had cast her off for ever.

"My foot's a bit easier now; it may be only a sprain, after all. But it was a lucky thing for me you happened to be near, my dear. Maybe you're in a hurry to be running off home, though?"

"Oh, no," the girl said sadly, her face very pale—"it's of no consequence whatever; I am glad I can be of use to you! But it was foolish of you to climb alone. What are your sons and daughters thinking of that they don't take better care of you?"

"Old Gus can show many a young jackanapes the way about!" the plucky old fellow answered proudly. "Not but what I could have managed with a strong arm to-day. It's old age creeping on, I reckon. As to children—I'm better off without any; they're nothing but a worry and a nuisance, like all young folk!"

"Perhaps," Muriel said, with wary diplomacy, "you have had a bad experience. Yet you say you have no family?"

"I'm a bachelor!" Mr. Horner responded with pride. "I stand on my own merits, and haven't a soul belonging to me except Jack! Jack's my nephew—a sad rascal!"

"Tell me about him"—this very coaxingly; "it will help to pass away the time, and I am fond of sad rascals. Is your nephew married?"

"Not he! Not but what he soon will be, in that heathenish part of the globe that he's set his heart on visiting—Spain! Pooh! In my young days likely young lads didn't run away from their country for such fancies! And Jack was always a sensible boy—my right hand until lately. Ah, my dear, you pretty young women have a lot to answer for! Whew—that was a smartish jump! I don't say that it's a mere sprain, after all."

"A love-affair?" Muriel said absently. "How very interesting! And did she—Mr. Horner, did the girl jilt him, or was it?"

"By Jove, she did—by Jove, she did', the heartless young jade!" the old gentleman exclaimed, in sudden anger. "Let him think she'd follow his fortunes to the world's end, and in less than a twelvemonth was engaged to my boy's dearest friend, a false, scheming, smooth-faced young vagabond who duped poor Jack right and left!

"That girl has robbed me of my nephew, madam; she's turned his very nature, and thrust these restless roving ideas into his head until he's not an atom of use to me or to my business!"

"Oh, poor fellow!" cried Jack's sometime sweetheart, with genuine sympathy. "Oh, do tell me all about it! I feel sorry for you! And is Ja—your nephew going away because of this?"

"He sails next week," old Gus returned forlornly. "It's of no use—he won't be persuaded."

And then in rapid disjointed fashion he gave Muriel an account of Jack's unsatisfactory love-affair, while all unseen a few tears fell from her brown eyes on to the old man's silver locks.

"He's coming down here to-morrow," Mr. Horner said in conclusion, "to spend a few days with me before starting. Maybe, if you don't leave before then, you'll see him. Now, my dear, you're a first-rate listener, but as quiet as a mouse: suppose you chatter to me a bit, and keep me lively until those lazy folk condescend to obey my orders. Are you a resident or a visitor, may I ask?

"A visitor," Muriel told him. "I am lodging at No. 3, The Parade, with my aunt, Mrs. Charteris. And next week I am going home. I will ask my uncle to call at the 'Grand' to-morrow morning and inquire after you. Now, Mr. Horner, your patience is rewarded, for I see that a cab has arrived, and here are two men to help you down to the drive; so I will say 'Good night.' I hope your foot will soon be quite—quite well!"

"Good evening, madam!" old Gus responded courteously, struggling with some difficulty to his feet, and looking kindly into the girl's flushed wistful face. "Thank you heartily for helping an old man out of a difficulty! Good evening! But won't you drive down with me? Pray do!"

"No," Muriel said, with a pretty smile of thanks—"I shall be home almost directly. Good-bye!"

And, after one swift glance into old Gus Horner's blue eyes, she ran lightly down the rocks.

Before she had proceeded many yards however she came to an abrupt stand-still; her bright face clouded over and her heart beat fast.

"Is it you?" she said coldly, as her fiancee came up to her, throwing away an unfinished cigar. "Why have you come? Did you imagine I was lost?"

Frederic Langdon regarded her in half-angry surprise. He had been engaged to Muriel but for five weeks, and during that brief period he had not once heard from her lips a word so icily contemptuous and indifferent as her greeting to-night.

Langdon was perfectly well aware of the advantages Muriel would reap from her marriage with him; but his love for her was ardent and sincere, and he firmly believed that when once she was his wife, the girl's affection for him would rapidly increase.

"Lost? Well, not quite," he answered. "But it is getting dusk, and Mrs. Charteris has inquired for you. I wanted you to take a turn down the Parade with me. Why so indifferent, Muriel? Has anything occurred to vex you, little one?" The girl halted suddenly, and, resting her elbow upon a projecting rock, laid her cheek upon her hand. Her face had grown very tired and sad.

"Mr. Langdon," she said, looking up at him, "why did I promise to marry you?"

"I really can't tell you," he answered, with a smile.

"I know," the girl went on gently; "it was because you were rich and generous and invariably kind to me, and the people at home—dad and all of them—were so horribly poor! They said it was a splendid offer for a girl like me, and that I should be worse than mad to reject it. I knew it would make them all so happy; and Lisa and Meg told me I could do great things for them when I was married. I liked you too—I was proud of my friendship with you; I was tired of the drudgery of teaching, and I wanted to make a fresh start. Then too, you know, I was feeling sore about Jack. I should never consent to marry you if it had not been that I knew Jack had forgotten me. But it was wrong of me to consent, and I know it now. I do not love you; I never shall love you. Mr. Langdon, please take this back."

Langdon took the little diamond ring she offered him and put it into his pocket.

"Why this sudden freak, you silly child?" he asked, frowning.

"I am going to be a governess again," Muriel answered quietly. "I shall go home next week, and begin work as soon as I can. You must believe me, Mr. Langdon, and be as angry with me as you like. But I am tired of our engagement, and desire it to cease."

There was a suspicion of scorn in her voice as she turned away with the air of an empress.

"Do you mean this?" Langdon asked, following her.

"I do!" she answered. "You must please go away to-morrow morning and forget my wayward caprices. I do not care for you, and our engagement is at an end."

The Parade was reached before Langdon uttered another word. He opened the gate of No. 3, and they stood for a moment in silence.

"Then I am to understand," he said, with bitter contempt and resentment, "that you are still wearing the willow for the faithless Jack? My attractions doubtless paled before his, yet I believe you will regret your decision."

"I think not," Muriel answered sweetly, although her face flushed painfully from her effort to appear calm; "and, if so, have we not all regrets? Sincerity is best, believe me!"

So they parted, without a hand-shake or word of farewell; and Frederic Langdon, as he lit a fresh cigar and made his way towards the band-stand, somehow felt that his parting shaft had failed to do him much credit.

* * * * * *

Three days later an old man and a young girl sat chatting contentedly on the sands. The brilliant morning sunshine beat down upon their heads—a silver one, covered with a broad brimmed straw hat; the other, bright brown, with a little blue yachting-cap perched coquettishly upon it; but the heat of the sun could not spoil their enjoyment.

Mr. Horner just had been placed here by his solicitous nephew; and, when the latter walked off in the direction of the town, a little brown eyed maiden in a blue cambric gown crept quietly down the sands and startled the unsuspicious old gentleman with a merry greeting. This was the first time that the invalid's ankle had permitted him to enjoy the sunshine and fresh sea-air, and Muriel's congratulations put him in high good-humor.

"Where's my nephew?" he cried at length, looking round. "Confound the boy—he's never at hand when he's wanted!" Then, with a profound sigh—"Ah, my dear, Jack's a wilful lad, and he'll have his own way in spite of all! That Spanish trip is a regular bugbear to me! Business indeed! As if Jack's proper place wasn't at my side, instead of taking the law into his own hands and kicking up his heels over yonder!"

"When does he start?" Muriel questioned hurriedly.

"On Saturday."

"Well, I think it's very undutiful of him!" cried the girl indignantly. "He ought to be ashamed of himself, Mr. Horner, and so I should like to tell him! I'm really disappointed in your nephew! Why—why—— Oh, Mr. Horner, here he comes!"

The girl's face grew red and white by turns as Jack strode towards them over the sands; but, despite her confusion, Muriel observed that he was attired in flannels which became him admirably, and that he wore a light cap on his curly head.

As her eyes rested tenderly upon his bright handsome face, she marvelled how she had lived through the past weary months without a sight of her hero. The blood rushed to her cheeks, her heart beat rapturously, deliriously, while Jack gave her a glance in which astonishment, pride, and anger were mingled.

"My nephew," said old Gus Horner proudly—"Miss—Miss—— My dear young lady, help me out—pray do!"

"Miss Heynes, Uncle Gus," Jack interposed coolly, completely master of the situation. "How d'ye do, Miss Heynes? Or am I making a mistake? Possibly you are 'Miss Heynes' no longer." His tone was pitiless, and Muriel shivered at his glance. Could Jack—her Jack—be so cruel, so unforgiving?

"'Heynes!'" "Uncle Gus" cried, staring with wide open eyes at Muriel. "Why, it's never Jack's 'Miss Heynes'—that is—you know, my boy—Langdon's 'Miss Heynes?'"

"Certainly not!" Muriel said, blushing deeply, while her eyes grew merry with laughter. "At present I flatter myself I am nobody's 'Miss Heynes.' I stand on my own responsibility, Mr. Horner. But your nephew doesn't seem to appreciate this renewal of our acquaintance. I think I will wish you good morning!"

"But you're never engaged to that scamp—that barefaced villain—that——"

"Uncle," Jack said coolly, "Miss Heynes doubtless does not desire to hear these interesting details. Pray do not let us be guilty of curiosity!"

"Fiddlesticks!" old Gus returned, with emphasis. His keen kindly eyes detected Muriel's sorrowful discomposure, but he saw possibilities of brightness in the future. "Do you remember our little talk the other night?" he said gently to the girl, who stood flushing painfully under Jack's scornful gaze. "I opened my old heart to you then, young lady, and now I expect a few disclosures in return. Never mind Jack—he's a fool! Look at me, my dear! Are you going to marry that scoundrel Langdon?"

"No!" Muriel replied, forcing a smile.

"There, now," her questioner cried triumphantly—"didn't I tell you so? Now, Jack, my lad, get off your high horse! You don't sit it easily. Where is Langdon, my pretty one?"

"I wished him 'Good-bye' the night I left you," Muriel ventured to explain. "The little conversation we had showed me that Mr. Langdon had represented several facts falsely both to me and to your nephew, and that the results of that misrepresentation must be remedied immediately. I was engaged to him for five weeks only, and now I shall never see him again. I do not wish it. Next week I shall return home to Devonshire."

Her sweet eyes filled with burning tears, but she would not break down in Jack's presence. "I will go now, I think," she added gently; "you have your nephew, and I have told you all I wished you to know."

Then she turned to Jack—Jack, who was gazing seaward with an inscrutable look on his face.

"Mr. Horner"—very sweetly—"will you shake hands with me before I go?"

Little Jack Horner turned and looked, with all his soul in his bright blue eyes, at the lovely face which he had vowed he would never gaze upon again; then silently he took her hand.

"Jack," Gus Horner cried tremulously, blinking his eyes suspiciously—"Jack, my boy, mark my words! If you go on that fool's errand to Spain this week, you'll come back to find this beautiful and charming young lady my wife!"

"Jack," Muriel echoed tenderly, with a swift expressive glance at her kind old champion, "if you go to Spain this week, you'll come back to find Mr. Horner my husband!"

A brief pause followed, during which brave old Gus forgot his sprained ankle and hobbled away over the sands.

"Look at him!" Muriel said, with tear-filled eyes. "Look, Jack—he wants you!"

Jack's eyes flashed back a radiant glance into hers, his lips trembled in the excess of his newly-restored joy.

"And I want you," he answered.

THE TEST.—She: "You look very disturbed."

He: "I am. While I was on my way here I lost a valuable ring."

She: "Gracious! How did that happen?"

He: "I don't know. I put it in my pocket before I came out and, when I got here, it was gone."

She: "Was it a diamond?"

He: "Oh, yes—a solitaire, three and a half carats, and a perfect stone in every way!"

She: "Oh, well, I wouldn't regret it! You may find it, you know. But, if you don't, there's no use crying over it."

He: "That's true. But I needed that ring, and I may have a lot of trouble to replace it."

She, smiling: "Nonsense. If she is a sensible girl, she will tell you she can get on without it."

He: "Do you really mean that?"

She: "Why, of course!"

He: "Then, darling, will you be mine?" (Suddenly displaying the ring.) "I did not lose it. It was only to test you."

She, falling into his arms: "Yes, dear. (Aside.) As if I didn't know what he kept his left hand in his pocket for!"

HURRIED MEALS.—It is a mistake to eat quickly. Mastication performed in haste must be imperfect, even with the best of teeth, and due admixture of the salivary secretion with the food cannot take place. When the practice of eating quickly and filling the stomach with unprepared food is habitual, either a much larger quantity of food than would be necessary under natural conditions is required, or the system suffers from lack of nourishment. A man may habitually live under an infliction of hurried meals, and endure the consequent loss of health, without knowing why he is not well or how easily the cause of his illness might be remedied.

At Home and Abroad.

According to Herr Hajak, of Vienna, the chances of a smoker suffering from diphtheria or other diseases of the throat, as compared with those of a non-smoker, are one to twenty-eight. Smoking tends to check the development of bacteria, and to kill them in fact. Herr Schiff declares that smoking should be forbidden in bacteriological laboratories for this reason.

One of the most important of the mercantile institutions of Berlin is an Egg Exchange. As the city consumes more than twelve million dozen of eggs annually it is a business of very great importance. On the forenoons of two days in the week the Produce Exchange is wholly given up to the egg dealers, both male and female. Uniform rates for eggs are thus established, which are observed by all dealers.

A Maryland man got into trouble with his employers and fled. When in a safe place he grew a beard and altered his personal appearance in other particulars. Then he returned to his employers and said he was a brother of the defaulter and wanted to settle the case for him. They were about to comply, when his old sweetheart, who was employed in the place, came in and recognized him. His arrest followed.

A dog who has eaten up a farm and a set of buildings has been found in eastern Maine. This dog killed a neighbor's sheep. The neighbor offered to call it square if the dog was killed. The dog's master refused to agree to this, and a lawsuit came next. To pay the costs and damages assessed by the court the owner of the dog had to mortgage his farm for $100. The mortgage had a bigger appetite than the dog, and soon his farm was gone and the owner had to move away. The dog is now dead.

In Japan, that land of gentle manners and other queer things, they have invented vegetable meat. The substance is called in the vernacular "torfu." It consists mainly of protein matter of the soya bean, and is claimed to be as easily digestible as meat. Torfu is as white as snow and is sold in tablets; it tastes like fresh malt. What with mineral wood, wood silk and vegetable meat, and other articles of food and meat made by science, nature may as well go out of business at once.

As a general rule, avoid sheltering under trees when overtaken by a thunderstorm out in the country. Rather put up with a drenching than run the risk of being struck by lightning. But suppose you are in a forest at the time, then be careful in your choice, as some trees are more liable to be struck than others. From observations in the forest lands of Lippe Detmold, extending over a period of eleven years, it appears that lightning struck fifty-six oaks, twenty firs, three or four pines, but not a single beech, though out of every ten trees there were seven beeches exposed to the raging elements.

Chambers' Journal calls attention to the fact that in a world and in an age where progress is one of the laws of existence the violin is to-day, not only as to form and all essential details, exactly what it was some 300 years ago, but that it is even now a less perfect instrument than it was when the old masters were warming their glue pots and mixing their vaunted varnish and chipping out their blocks of wood in the little Italian town of Cremona, now two centuries back. The experience of centuries and the ingenuity of many generations of skilled mechanics have been altogether unavailing, and violinists today are content to starve themselves that they may give hundreds, nay, even thousands, for instruments which did not produce tens when they first left the workshops at Cremona.

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Our Young Folks.

MARGERY'S IDEA

BY S. F. L.

EVERYBODY looked very mysterious this afternoon, and a great deal of whispering was going on.

Tom and Arthur had made themselves a private room underneath the table by pulling down one side of the cloth, and they seemed to be having a very animated conversation in a very low tone of voice.

Cissy and Winnie were seated at nurse's feet eagerly watching her stitch, stitch, at a pair of doll's shoes, which seemed small enough to fit the Fairy Queen, and Master Osmond, the scapegoat of the family, who could not sit still, as a rule, for more than a minute at a time, was very quiet, and seemed busily employed in painting himself and a picture at the same time.

Cuthbert was also painting at the other end of the table, and only raised his eyes from his picture to steal a glance at his elder sister, Margery, who sat in the far-off corner of the room, where the light of the fire did not reach.

Everybody seemed busy except Margery, but she did not seem to have anything to do, for she sat with her head propped on her hands, staring hard at the opposite wall.

Presently, however, when Cuthbert looked up, he saw that his sister had left off staring at the wall and was crying silently. Cuthbert got up from his painting and went over to her.

"Why are you crying, Margery?" he said.

"I'm not crying," said Margery, wiping away her tears, and looking very cross.

"Never mind, Margery, dear," whispered Cuthbert, after a little while. "Mother will know why you can't give her a Christmas present: I will tell her that you gave all your money to Arthur, because he lost his money box."

"That's no good!" said Margery, beginning to cry again.

"Well, what shall I do?" asked Cuthbert.

"Hold your tongue!" said Margery crossly.

Poor Cuthbert went back to his painting without another word, but he had hardly settled down to work again before Margery called out:

"Cuthbert!"

Cuthbert sighed, he put down his paint brush and went back to Margery.

"Cuthbert," said Margery, seizing him by the arm and pulling him into a corner, "I've got an idea! I have just thought how to make heaps of money!"

"How?" said Cuthbert, looking very doubtful, for Margery's ideas were sometimes rather wild.

"Listen," said Margery excitedly. "Every evening since mother has been ill, nurse goes into her room after she has put us to bed, and stays with her all night."

"What about it?" asked Cuthbert, wondering what was coming.

"Well," said Margery, speaking very quickly, "to-night, as soon as nurse has gone into mother's room, we will get up and dress. Then we will creep downstairs, open the front door, steal out into the street, and——"

"And what?" said Cuthbert in a horror-struck voice.

"And then we will sing carols!"

Cuthbert fell back into a chair, pale and breathless.

"Isn't it a splendid idea?" said Margery.

"I think it's a dreadful idea!" said Cuthbert.

"Don't be silly," said Margery. "You have a beautiful voice and can sing carols awfully well, and I will sing, too, and we shall make heaps of money, and then we can buy mother a beautiful Christmas present, and——"

"I am not going to do it," said Cuthbert.

"Then you are a sneak!" said Margery, stamping her foot.

"I don't care," said Cuthbert; "I am not going carol-singing."

"Then you're a coward, and I'll go alone," said Margery.

Cuthbert blushed.

"I'm not a coward," he said.

The quarrel was interrupted by nurse looking up from her work and calling out—

"Why, what's the matter? You look as if you were concocting the Gunpowder Plot."

All that evening Margery kept darting angry glances at Cuthbert, who looked very miserable. Every time she passed him she whispered in his ear, "Coward!"

This was the word Cuthbert hated most, for he could not help feeling that he was not very brave.

Coward! Yes, he felt that he could not have the courage to do as Margery wished, and yet—could he let her go alone?

This thought tormented him so much that he could not eat anything at tea-time, and nurse asked him if he felt ill.

When he got into his bedroom that night he did not undress, but sat on the edge of the bed, and one by one the hot, salt tears, trickled down his cheek.

Presently he heard a tap at the door, and, as he quickly wiped his eyes on the corner of the sheet, Margery crept into the room.

"Are you coming?" she whispered.

"Yes," said Cuthbert with a groan.

Margery smiled and took his hand. They crept downstairs and Margery opened the big front door.

It gave a loud creak, and their hearts came into their mouths. They waited a moment and listened, but nobody stirred, and so they stole out into the street.

"How shall we get back?" asked Cuthbert, feeling very frightened.

"Oh, it's all right," said Margery cheerfully; "I have left the door ajar."

It was a bitter winter evening and very dark, and Cuthbert began to shiver with fright and cold.

"Are you frightened?" asked Margery.

"No—o," said Cuthbert, trying to make his voice sound brave.

"Let us go this way," said Margery, walking very fast, and pulling Cuthbert along by the arm. Presently she stopped before a big house, brilliantly lighted up.

"Where are you going?" said Cuthbert, as Margery went up the steps.

"I am going to sing," said Margery. "I will begin 'Hark, the herald angels sing,' and you must join in as loudly as you can. Now then!"

Margery began to sing the pretty carol, but she was so excited and it was so cold, that her voice was very quavery.

"Why don't you join in?" she whispered to Cuthbert.

Cuthbert opened his mouth and tried to sing. But somehow or other, instead of the air ringing out with the clear tones of his voice, which was usually so pretty, there only sounded a little frightened sob.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" cried Margery, her eyes filling with tears, "we shall never be able to make any money if you are so silly!"

"I can't help it!" sobbed poor Cuthbert breaking down in despair.

"Fiddlesticks!" said Margery crossly. Then she added more gently, "Let's try again."

She began to sing once more, and this time Cuthbert managed to check his sobs and sing the carol in a very shaky voice. They succeeded in getting through the first verse, and then Margery stopped to whisper:

"I don't think it sounds very nice!"

Just then the door opened and a footman came out.

"Here's a shilling to run away," he said crossly; and then, thrusting the coin in Margery's hand, he went in and banged the door.

Margery looked at the silver piece in her hand.

"I feel very like a beggar," she said.

"Don't you think we had better go home now," asked Cuthbert. "We shall be able to buy mother a present—and it's beginning to snow."

"I suppose we had better," said Margery reluctantly.

She took Cuthbert's hands, and the two little carol-singers hurried along as fast as their legs would carry them. But the night was very dark, and the snow was falling in thick white flakes, covering the ground and the roofs of the houses, and even the lamp-posts, with a white garment; so that the streets seemed quite different from what they were in the day. Presently Margery stopped, quite out of breath.

"I don't think we're going the right way," she said in a frightened voice.

"Oh, Margery!" cried Cuthbert in dismay, "we shall be lost, and—and——" here Cuthbert burst into tears; "we shall die of cold."

"Courage, Cuffy!" cried Margery bravely, and taking her brother's arm. "Let's go back the way we came."

They set off walking again; but the snow was becoming quite thick on the ground, so that it was difficult to get along without slipping. Presently Margery stumbled and fell. She uttered a cry of pain.

"Oh, I've hurt my ankle, and—and I've lost the shilling!"

Poor Margery, who had been so brave up to the present, gave way now and sobbed as if her heart would break.

Cuthbert sat down in the snow beside her, and putting his arm around her neck, sobbed in company.

For a few minutes they sat there, when suddenly they heard footsteps hurrying along. Margery looked up and saw it was a lady coming towards them.

"Quick, Cuffy!" she cried; "run and ask her to help us."

Cuthbert ran up to the lady, and said in a pleading voice, "Please, ma'am we've lost our way, and— why, it's nurse!"

Then Cuthbert jumped into the "lady's" arms and hugged her and kissed her until she was quite out of breath.

"You naughty, bad, wicked, little—darling!" cried Nurse, sobbing with delight. "I have been looking for you everywhere, and I was afraid to tell mamma you were lost, and I have been worried out of my skin, and you both deserve a good beating," she said all in one breath.

But the two little wanderers did not mind Nurse scolding them, and when she took Margery in her arms and Cuthbert held on to her skirt, they both declared she was "a perfect angel," and vowed they would never go carol singing again.

THE FILBERT AND THE ACORN.

It was Saturday afternoon, and a schoolboy, who had just come in from his half-holiday, had emptied his pockets on to the table.

There was a knife, a ball of string, some marbles, a peg-top, an apple, some toffee, a lot of buttons, and ever so many other things, amongst which were a filbert and an acorn.

The schoolboy went upstairs two steps at a time, to brush his hair and wash his hands for tea.

Meanwhile the filbert began to sneer at the poor acorn.

"How dare you lie so near me, you coarse, common thing?" said she. "Look at my rustling brown silk dress, and at your brown serge; and then your frightful cup, like a hideous 'Tam o' Shanter,' turned bottom upwards.

"You are only fit to feed pigs. But as for me, the ladies and gentlemen eat me with their wine at dessert."

"Well," said the acorn meekly, "what does it matter how we die as long as we have been of some use? And if I am only fit to feed pigs, yet there are many people who like roast pork."

"Don't answer me, you impudent thing," retorted the filbert angrily. "I won't be answered. If I had any hands and you had any ears, I would box them."

So the acorn, who loved peace, held his tongue.

At this moment the boy came back into the room, with a nice clean face and hands, and quite ready for his tea.

"Hullo!" said he. "I quite forgot this filbert." Then he cracked it with his teeth and ate it. "As to acorns," he continued, "they are no good to eat, they are too bitter, though it is fine fun to gather them." Then he flung the acorn out of the window.

But the acorn fell upon soft ground, and it grew and grew, until after a hundred years it was a splendid oak tree. Then it was cut down, and became part of a stately ship.

When we are tempted to boast of our fine ways and fine company, we should do well to remember that our humble neighbors are often of much more real use to the world than ourselves. A. H. B.

EARLY HOURS.—As we grow older we learn wisdom in this matter. The gray-haired parent, whose dancing days are over, and whose limbs are not elastic, is glad to hasten bed-time, and to leave his daughters to their foolish joy in the late hours. He would lengthen his nights in spite of his difficulty in sleeping. Very few persons over sixty years old care to sit up after eleven o'clock in the evening, and would rather be invisible at an earlier hour. Old age may not need more sleep than youth, but it is more covetous of sleep, and sooner disgusted with the day's excitement. "G to bed early" is the advice which the elders give to the younger race, all the more emphatic as they remember their own sins in this kind in the former years, and wonder that they could have taken such needless risks in those night frolics. That is the advice, too, of the medical journals and men. Was there ever a wise physician who would counsel his patients to sit up until midnight as a rule, or even as a frequent exception? The wisdom in this matter, nevertheless, is of the kind that comes by experience, and the sage warning of the elders is oftenest unheeded.

THE WORLD'S HAPPENINGS.

A horse jumped aboard a cable car in New York the other day.

It is computed that sixty-seven people die and seventy are born every minute.

Experience in electrical welding shows that the metal is strengthened at the point of welding.

A Bangor, Me., man was struck and killed by lightning while he was hugging his best girl.

The jungle fowl of Australia builds a nest that is about twenty feet in diameter and fifteen feet high.

"Blind Pig" is the name given to a "speak easy," or unlicensed saloon, in some parts of Michigan.

Coney Island, the famous New York watering place, was originally called Coneyn or Rabbit Island.

The largest room in the world is said to be the hall of the Imperial palace in St. Petersburg. It is 160 feet long by 150 feet wide.

Lightning is most destructive in level, open country. Cities, with their numerous projections and wires, are comparatively exempt.

It may interest those who love to compare man with monkeys, to know that the latter frequently get horribly sea sick when taken on the ocean.

A correspondent of a London paper fancies that Christianity is being largely killed by respectability and by the over-dressing of most church-goers of both sexes.

"I think," remarked the goat, charging headlong at the small boy who was bringing up the rear of the political procession, "I'll do a little business in the campaign buttin' line myself."

A collector of bad debts who lives in a New Jersey town drives a horse over which is thrown a sheet bearing this inscription: "This horse stops only in front of houses whose inmates are bad pay."

The language of Greece to-day, allowing for the changes which would naturally be brought about during the centuries, is substantially the same as the language used by Demosthenes and Pericles.

In signalling at sea never more than four flags are used at one time. It is interesting to know that with eighteen colored flags and never more than four at a time no fewer than 79,642 signals can be given.

At the battle of Trafalgar the heaviest gun used threw a projectile weighing only thirty two pounds, which was 6.4 inches in diameter: the modern 110-gun uses a shell weighing 2000 pounds, of 16¼ inches in diameter

A remarkable case of accomplished prophecy was furnished by Daniel Collins of Belvidere, N. J., who was run down by a railroad train and killed as he was walking on the track, a fate he had long ago predicted for himself

The British authorities in India have been obliged to discontinue the bounties on dead snakes, because the natives went into the business of breeding the reptiles on a large scale in order to secure the reward paid for their dead bodies.

The new illustration of the distances of the stars is that it would take all the Lancashire cotton factories four hundred years to spin a thread long enough to reach the nearest fixed star, at the present rate of production of about 155,000,000 miles per day.

Two brothers of Tortosa in Spain, peasants, quarreled recently over a couple of hens that had done some slight damage in the yard of one of them. One brother thereupon split the other's head open with an axe, killed his wife, his two children and the servant girl, and left the country.

Rifle bullets are now photographed in their course by means of the electric spark. The camera is taken into a dark room, which the bullet is caused to traverse. As it passes the camera it is made to interrupt an electric circuit and produce a spark, which illuminates it for an instant, and enables the impression to be taken.

George Mogie, of Cheney, Kansas, attempted to cross the Walnut river a day or two ago, and the stream being swollen the horse lost its footing. Mogie fell into the water, but caught hold of the horse's tail and it swam ashore with him. When it reached the bank it kicked Mogie in the forehead and killed him instantly.

An old pawn ticket, signed by Tasso, the poet, and dated 1570, has been found in a Florentine curiosity shop in a portfolio of old letters. Translated into English it reads; "I, the undersigned, herewith acknowledge the receipt of twenty five lire from Sig. Abraham Levi, for which he holds as security a sword of my father, four sheets and two table covers."

There are, says the Figaro, at least 300 horse-cutter shops in Paris. The first one dates from July 1, 1896, since when the consumption has grown continuously. In 1872 5034 horses were eaten in Paris; in 1878, 10,000, in 1894, 21,227; in 1895, more than 30,000. A still larger growth of the "hippophagic habit" is possible, as automobiles and bicycles take the place of horses.

A CHILD'S DEATH.

BY C. E. S.

In some rude spot where vulgar herbage grows,
If chance a violet rear its purple head,
The careful gardener moves it ere it blows,
To thrive and flourish in a nobler bed.
Such was thy fate, dear child,
Thy opening sweet!
Pre-eminence in early bloom was shown,
For earth too good, perhaps,
And loved too much—
Heav'n saw and early marked thee for its own!

ECCENTRIC WILLS.

There is no one more capable of giving his friends a really genuine surprise than the eccentric testator. Paul Scarron, who bequeathed to his wife permission to marry again, to the Academy power to alter the French language, and to Pierre Corneille five hundred pounds of patience, was probably the most farcical of such will makers; but the race is a hardy one, and never wholly dies out. It is confined to no particular country, age, or condition of life, and there appear to be as many curious wills made nowadays as ever before.

What, for instance, could be more extraordinary in its way than the following clause in the will of a Frenchman who died recently: "I request that my body be delivered to the Paris Gas Company for the purpose of being placed in a retort. I always used my mental power for the enlightenment of the public, and I desire that my body be used to enlighten the people after my death."

Still more odd, if not altogether unique, was the whim of a wealthy old bachelor who, having endured much from "attempts made by my family to put me under the yoke of matrimony," conceived and nursed such an antipathy to the fair sex as to impose upon his executors the duty of carrying out perhaps the most ungallant provision ever contained in a will. "I beg," so it ran, "that my executors will see that I am buried where there is no woman interred either to the right or to the left of me. Should this not be practicable in the ordinary course of things, I direct that they purchase three graves and bury me in the middle one of the three, leaving the two others unoccupied."

Cremation is no longer a novelty; but a German who was a member of an angling club in New York, in his will requested his fellow-anglers, after cremating his body, to throw his ashes into the sea on the Romer shoals of the bay of New York, where they had often fished together. The will was carried out to the letter, and whether or not the ashes had attracted the fish cannot be known, but when the anglers next threw out their lines where they had sprinkled the ashes of their deceased friend, they certainly made an exceptionally heavy catch.

Some millionaires during their lives appear to enjoy the luxury of preparing at great expense the splendid mausoleums they wish to occupy after death. M. Lalanne, a wealthy Parisian, went to the other extreme. He had a horror of anything like ostentatious funerals, and after bequeathing over a million francs to various public institutions of his native town, he directed that his body would be buried at the cheapest possible rate, in fact, like that of a pauper. A shabby one-horse vehicle carried his remains to the fosse commune or common grave, and the cost of the funeral was only six francs—that being the charge for the cheapest kind of funeral under the French system, where the undertaker's business is a State monopoly.

Men who have followed the hounds have at times desired to be buried in their hunting-dress, but they no longer enjoy a monopoly in this matter. A Welsh lady, who was well known as an eccentric in the vicinity of Llanrug, was recently buried there in accordance with the provisions of her will, which proved to be in keeping with the local estimate of her character. She wished to be buried in her hunting-suit, her shoes and her carriages were to be burnt on the day of her funeral, and all her horses—six in number—varying in value from $300 to $400 a head, were to be shot on the day following the funeral.

The remainder of her real and personal property to the value of $450,000 was left to her "dear husband"—a former farm-laborer on her estate, with whom some years before she had, on her own suggestion, contracted a marriage—provided that he strictly and literally carried out all the orders expressed in her will.

A horror of being buried alive so haunted Mr. R——, that on his death recently, he left minute instructions in his will to render such a fate impossible in his case. His body was not to be fastened up in his coffin until thirty days after his funeral, and the vault in which his body was laid was to be kept lighted and its doors left unlocked. Provision was also made to employ two men—trusted employees of the deceased—to guard the entrance, one by day and the other by night.

A Yorkshire gentleman left his property to be divided among those of his descendants who were not less than six feet four inches in height; and a Vienna banker made a bequest to his nephew with the stipulation that "he shall never, on any occasion, read a newspaper, his favorite occupation."

Money is so generally welcome that it is hardly conceivable that a legacy in hard cash should ever be refused. Occasionally, however, owing to the absurdity or hardness of the conditions attached to them, substantial bequests of this kind have been refused. A sum of $1000 was left to, and refused by, a gentleman because it was stipulated that he should first walk down the King's Road, Brighton, dressed in female attire.

A maiden lady over fifty, with a strong aversion to all theatrical amusements, was scandalized by being put down for a legacy in the will of a facetious friend, who tacked on the conditions that within six months of the testator's death the legatee should obtain an engagement at a London theatre and perform there one whole week.

The restrictions imposed on widows and other legatees with regard to matrimony are often arbitrary, and sometimes smack of cruelty. A husband, in one case reported recently, left his widow an annual income of $5000, which was to be reduced to $4000 in the event of the lady marrying again. Another reduction of $1000 was to be made on the birth of the first child of the second marriage, and every additional child was to involve the further loss of $500 a year.

Grains of Gold.

Conscience is very often confounded with opinion.

Nothing so evidently proves esteem as imitation.

The remedy for injuries is not to remember them.

A good name, like good will, is got by many actions and lost by one.

Character gives splendor to youth, and awe to wrinkled skin and gray hair.

Pleasure is like a cordial; a little of it is not injurious; but too much destroys.

There is no condition of life that excludes a wise man from discharging his duty.

Pale death beats with impartial foot at the hovels of the poor and turrets of kings.

The smallest children are nearest heaven, as the smallest planets are nearest the sun.

Murmur at nothing if our ills be reparable, it is foolish; if remediless, it is vain.

Silence never shows itself to so great an advantage as when it is made the reply to calumny and defamation.

Scorn not thy fellow-creature; there is some spark of good yet left in every man, even though he be lying in the veriest mire.

Femininities.

Ladies' belts are now made for silver watches. That seems like a waist of time.

A female baseball club, claiming to be from Boston, was arrested at Elk Point, S. D., for violating the Sunday law.

"If you love her, old fellow, why don't you marry her?" Bachelor doctor: "Marry her? Why, she is one of my best patients!"

Cincinnati folks, when they do have religion, have it thoroughly. A poor girl of that city had no clothes presentable to wear to church, but rather than stay away she stole a suit that would do.

Mistress, greatly scandalized: Is it possible, Huldah, you are making bread without having washed your hands! New kitchen girl: Lor'! what's the difference, mum? It's brown bread.

Wife: I thought that that was a married couple before us, but it isn't. Husband: How do you know? Wife: She stopped to look into the windows of that bonnet-shop, and he stopped and looked too.

"If every atom of the human body is renewed every seven years, I cannot be the same woman that you married," said a wife to her husband. "I've been suspecting that for some time," he replied, with a chuckle.

"Papa, will you buy me a drum?" said a little lad to his father. "Ah—but, my boy, you will disturb me very much if I do!" returned "papa." "Oh, no, papa; I won't drum except when you're asleep!" promised the little fellow.

A New Hampshire paper says that many years ago a Concord man was asked to give one of his daughters in marriage to the applicant. The reply of the old gentleman was frank and comprehensive: "Yes, yes; and don't you know some likely young man who will accept of another?"

"You seem to have impressed the Queen of Sheba very favorably," observed Hiram, King of Tyre, handing over the freight bill for his last shipment of cedars of Lebanon; "she says you are the most brilliant conversationalist she ever met." "H'm—yes," mused King Solomon, biting into a pomegranate; "I let her do most of the talking."

I do not merely admire women, says an author, as the most beautiful objects of creation, or love them as the sources of happiness; but I reverence them as the redeeming glories of humanity, the sanctuaries of the virtues, the antepasts and pledges of those perfect qualities of the head and heart combined with external and attractive charms, which, by their union, almost exhalt the human into the angelic character.

Princess Laetitia, Dowager Duchess of Aosta, has just given a cyclists' fete, says the Paris Figaro, in the large garden of the Royal Palace at Turin. In the evening the Princess and twenty ladies in elegant sporting toilets held a paper chase with forty gentlemen bicyclists over the paths of the garden, the trees of which were charmingly illuminated with Chinese lanterns. The paper chase was followed by a procession before Princess Laetitia, who congratulated the winners. Dancing and a supper concluded the proceedings.

There is a story told of the late Charles Jamrach, the naturalist and dealer in wild animals, who died in London last summer, which is so well vouched for that it may be accepted as worthy of belief. Mr. Jamrach was married more than once; and the story is to the effect that, when a friend condoled with him on the loss of his second wife, the naturalist answered with a heavy sigh, "Yes, yes—as you say, she was a good wife; but," he added, as if he felt compelled to speak the whole truth, "she never took kindly to the animals. Why, even in winter she wouldn't let the snakes sleep under the bed!"

The almond eyes of the daughters of Confucius are renowned throughout the world. Hitherto, it has been supposed that these features were the work of nature, resultant, probably, on natural selection. This erroneous belief is corrected, however, by a traveler, who tells us that in order to make the eyes the long shape so much admired, the women have often recourse to a kind of home surgery which must be very painful. A Chinese mother who has a child affected with small eyes takes the child and slits the eyelid at the corner, just where it joins the lower lid. A very small slit is made, and this is then left to heal. As soon as it is healed it is slit again and this process is continued until the eyes appear very long and prominent.

Any woman who looks pretty at breakfast time is really so. It is one thing to be charming at a ball, in pale blue silk and tulle, with "touching up" of all sorts, and under the gaslights, but quite another thing to be pretty in a dark calico, with the morning sun full in the room, and all the homely accessories of daily life by way of background, and the hair in crimps. There are plenty of girls who are pretty on the seashore, in big shade hats; on horseback, in a "habit;" in walking costume, with the softening of waving frisettes and black net mask veils; but the family breakfast-table is the test. Yes, it is the test, not only for beauty, but for better things. If the smiles are bright and the speech soft, the movements gentle, and the temper sweet, then you may rely upon the disposition under almost any circumstances.

Masculinities.

When the button comes off the back of a man's shirt his choler begins to rise.

Life is a tiresome journey, and when a man arrives at the end he is all out of breath.

She had false hair, and he didn't know it; but at the wedding her father gave her away.

A Mexican official has resigned his position because, as he explained, he was too rich to hold office.

A Long Island man while passing through a grain field was struck in the eye with a grain of wheat and blinded.

What nonsense it is to say a man is inclined to be bald. When a man is becoming bald it is quite against his inclination.

Visitor: But this portrait of Mr. Bolger is a good deal more than life-size. Artist: I know it. That is the size he thinks he is.

When a man sets out to be a fool and falls in love, Providence in its mercy closes his eyes, and mos' ennythin' mought do fur a nangel.

The greatest stretch of duplicity—A young man trying to treat his sweetheart's small depraved brother as though he were his dearest friend.

Census reports show imbecility steadily on the increase, and that to day there are nearly 100,000 mental defectives of this class in the United States.

A lady who found a baby in a basket on her doorstep, took the infant to the station house, but saved the basket to carry home her marketing.

Probably the largest farmer in Maryland is General William McKenny, who owns sixty farms, embracing 20,000 acres, and gives them his personal attention.

"How shall I have my new bonnet trimmed," asked Maria, "so that it shall agree with my complexion?" "If you want it to match your face, have it plain," replied Hattie.

It is no uncommon thing to see the boy who is so lame it almost gives him the lockjaw to go after a bucket of water, slip out the back way and run in a game of ball at the rate of forty miles an hour.

Paris policemen have been supplied with electric dark lanterns, by means of which they can see 150 feet away. They were employed successfully in a recent raid in the Bois de Boulogne on the homeless persons who sleep there at night.

Bessie was just finishing her breakfast as papa stooped to kiss her before going to town. The little one gravely took up her napkin and wiped her cheek. "What, Bessie," said her father, "wiping away papa's kiss?" "Oh, no!" said she, looking up with a sweet smile. "I'se wubbing it in."

The professor sat in an easy-chair on the deck, looking very pale. The compassionate captain asked him how he felt.

"Miserable, miserable! I'm ill, captain, I'm ill! I have paid tribute to Neptune till I have lost everything!"

"But," said the captain, "I see you still have your boots left."

"Yes," answered the professor faintly; "but they were on the outside."

"Steward," said a passenger on board a steamer one morning while at breakfast, handing across the table a cup containing some dark muddy-looking liquid, "what is that?".

"I think it's tea, sir," replied the steward, after a hasty inspection.

"Oh, very well," rejoined the traveler; "then take it away, and if it's tea bring me coffee, and if it's coffee bring me tea."

When a Chinese emperor dies, the intelligence is announced by despatches to the several provinces, written with blue ink, the mourning color. All persons of rank are required to take red silk ornaments from their caps with the ball or button of rank; all subjects of China, without exception, are called upon to forbear shaving their heads for a hundred days, within which period none may marry, play upon musical instruments, or perform any sacrifice.

The late Lord Aylesbury was once standing bareheaded in a well-known hatter's shop in Piccadilly while his hat was being ironed. A well-known bishop entered the shop in full attire, and, seeing Lord Aylesbury bareheaded, mistook him for a shopman. Taking off his own head covering, the bishop said, "I want to know if you have a hat like this?" Lord Aylesbury surveyed the hat and its owner, and turned on his heel, with the curt remark, "No—I haven't; and, if I had, I'm hanged if I'd wear it!"

"So you are going to marry that small, wheezy, consumptive-looking specimen of a man, are you?" said one girl to another. "I really don't see what you can see in him to love."

"Mary," said her friend, "your father is a small man, isn't he?"

"Yes," was the reply, "but what of that?"

"Nothing, except that if he wasn't small it would be doubtful if your mother would be the boss. I'm going to marry that small man because I'm fond of having my own way, and won't accept any risks."

Latest Fashion Phases.

There is a positive rage for the finest embroidery of all kinds, not only worked in silk and tinsel thread, but also for that done in stones and paillettes. Turquoise galons are above all popular, and the counterfeit jewel has doubled its price, while the new varieties of oval-shaped stones—mother-of-pearl and opalescent cat's-eye—are also much used.

The round billycock hat with a low crown and a narrow brim is most in favor for riding, and has quite replaced the beaver. Black is, perhaps, preferred, though brown and gray and green are worn. For garden parties the Tam o'Shanter shape carries all before it, and any quantity of roses and ostrich plumes may be used in the trimming.

Boots are much higher than formerly and are as fashionable made of tan leather as of patent leather or glace kid. Large bows or any great ornamentation for evening wear have been abandoned, and only diamond buckles no larger than a dime or embroidery of the finest pattern are used. In lieu of buckles one sometimes sees the smallest of bows and fringed ends no longer than an inch.

The newest tint in lace is the ochre shade, not deep, indeed, but of the most delicate hue, and still faintly suggestive of green, with a slight blending of yellow. Point d'Alencon, too, worked with steel and gold still holds its own, while for the new style bodices and frills and jabots Point de Flandres is deemed quite the correct thing.

The plain skirt is no longer de rigueur. Ruches and flowers of two colors, either laid one over the other or gathered together, are universally used, particularly in thin materials. Skirt panels are also once more in fashion. The prettiest are those made of wide bands of lace, just concealing some strong contrasting color. Velvet is also sometimes used; still, that style only accords with the heavier makes of silk.

A current fashion much in vogue is the veiling of all sorts of colors and all sorts of materials. Rich royal blue is veiled with brilliant grass-green gauze; black, thin materials are laid over color or white, black over white being for the moment the fad par excellence.

The most delightful visters are in the market, made of a shot diagonal material which has the light charm of alpaca. They are cut either in the Chesterfield shape, fastened down the front beneath a fly, or buttoned on the shoulder, with one small strap at the waist, and hanging loosely to the hem. Another style is a sort of jacket shape, made detachable, so that either portion may be worn alone, the lower forming a not unusual skirt.

A New York correspondent writing of the season's outlook for fashion remarks that skirts will be trimmed more or less lavishly.

There are two distinct styles of trimming, and I think the most popular one will be the narrow ruffles, or flounces, two to four on each skirt. Those cut on the straight of the cloth are favored most, so far, and they are simply hemmed on the bottom, but sometimes they are set on at the top as a Spanish flounce, and sometimes with the narrow puff. Again they will have a beaded heading or a gauffered one. They are sometimes plaited, but oftener gathered.

Some skirts have but one ruffle, and this run on with a cord. Ruffles may be one inch wide or eight. I saw one eight inches wide gathered over a cord, and at the bottom of this ruffle there was another sewed to the edge by a cord, and this was but an inch wide. It was very odd, but pretty.

On another dress there was a knife plaited ruffle of satin cut on the cross and only showing one inch below a flat band of the satin cut lengthwise of the material. This band was two and one half inches wide, and it was sewed over a stiff lining, which was slightly padded at the top, so that it had a very rich appearance. There was another most beautiful trimming around the skirt, though it could not come under the name of a flounce.

There was a skirt of putty colored cloth, thick and fine. All around the bottom of the skirt there was embroidered a flight of swallows, their metallic luster being admirably brought out. I noticed, too, among the new trimming to skirts the old "reversed plaiting." This headed a narrow knife plaiting of silk.

When this is made with accuracy it is very handsome. Some of the flounces are finished in this way. One flounce is hemmed on both edges. This is then gathered near the top, and a milliner's fold of velvet is drawn along to hold it down. There are also narrow flounces put on in zigzag lines, others in scallops and still others in festoons. In fact, flounces have suddenly burst upon us. Yet they are so modest and unobtrusive that none but a trained eye would remark their number.

In addition to the flounces there are panels more or less ornate set on each side the front breadths. These are often of shirred or puffed material, never like the rest of the gown, and there are numbers of the new tablier or apron front skirts. These are as a general rule stately and imposing, particularly when there is a train to the skirt. The train of the coming season will not be wide and spreading, but narrow and long and flexible, so that by a dexterous turn of the body it can be made to swathe the feet in its classic folds. It will be worn on gowns for day receptions as well as for evening, but for the street the tendency is to have gowns clear the ground by at least two inches. And the skirts will not be nearly so wide round the bottom, either.

The close sleeve is decidedly a fact, and only a few large ones are seen. Even these are so made that the fullness falls down flatly in uneven natural folds. There a few "flowing" sleeves, made loose and open at the wrist, the under parts being filled in with full ruffles of light lace. Some sleeves for home dresses end at the elbows, with a fall of lace in the directoire style. We find the new gowns made in the styles of Louis XV and Louis XVI with vests, and with the pointed, cutaway effect in front, and in the back the postilion or the ripple effect. There are also Louis XIII effects. It is to these that we owe the apron front and the immense epaulets of lace.

These skirts where the front breadth is so prettily wrought, as they are with lace, puffings and fancy embroidery, are very well adapted to those ladies whose age or avoirdupois precludes dancing. The back part of the skirt may be of one of the superb brocades or of heavy armure, peau de soie or moire, which, by the way, will be one of the favorite silks of the season for handsome gowns, or the black breadths may be of lyons velvet. The richer the goods the more suitable they are for this style. The open vest, with an abundance of real or imitation jewels, is perhaps the most suitable to harmonize with it.

The new caprice—for it is no more—for the medical corselet is quite a general one. The prominent feature of this is a sort of outside corset shape. In some cases it extends down over the hips eight or ten inches and is carried up to the bust line in one unbroken sweep, fitting the figure like a coat of mail. These are either richly embroidered or of material of such regal quality that it needs no trimming save something around the top and bottom as a finish.

Odds and Ends.

ON A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS.

Wicker chairs and bamboo furniture are cleaned by soap and water and a little corn meal rubbed on briskly. Wicker stains more quickly than bamboo, and after several cleanings they are hardly susceptible of further renovating. When that time arrives they can be stained or enamelled with excellent effect.

Give the babies the health and comfort they should have. Feed them regularly, dress comfortably, give them plenty of sleep, water and pure air.

Soak canned goods in iced water an hour before heating. This will remove the "tinny" taste they sometimes have.

A bunch of clover left drying in a room will effectually keep out flies, which cannot bear the odor.

A cup of hot beef tea or hot milk, with a dash of orange juice in it, is a splendid soporific and quencher of thirst.

After mud has been brushed from black dresses there frequently remains a stain. This can be removed by rubbing with a slice of raw potato.

In buying canned goods an eminent physician's instructions are to reject every article that does not show the line of rosin round the edge of the solder cap, the same as is seen on the seam on the side of the can. Reject every can that does not have the name of the manufacturer or the firm upon it, as well as the name of the company or town where manufactured. Standards have all this. When the wholesale dealer is ashamed to have his name on the goods, fight shy of him. Press up the bottom of the can. If decomposition is beginning the tin will rattle the same as the bottom of the oiler of your sewing machine will do. If the goods are sound it will be solid, and there will be no rattle in the tin. Reject every tin that shows any sign of rust around the cap on the inside of the head of the can. If housekeepers are educated on these points then the nitrate of zinc amalgam will become a thing of the past.

Chocolate Caramels.—One half pound of grated chocolate, two teacups of sugar, one half cup of milk and water, a lump of butter, one teaspoonful of alum.

Cookies.—One cup of sugar, one half cup of lard or butter, one half cup of sour milk, one half teaspoonful of soda, just flour enough to roll, baking quickly. Add any flavoring you wish. No eggs are required. These are very nice if grated or prepared cocoanut is added.

Delicious Pudding.—One quart of boiled milk, mixed with a quarter of a pound of mashed potatoes and the same quantity of flour, with one or two ounces of butter, and two ounces of sugar. When it is cold, add three eggs well beaten; bake half an hour, and eat with wine sauce.

Sponge Cake.—Take three eggs, beat three minutes; then add one and one-half cups of sugar, and beat five minutes; add one teacup of flour and one teaspoonful of cream tartar, and beat three minutes; add one-half teaspoonful of soda, dissolve in one half cup of cold water, and another cup of flour; beat enough to mix well.

Oyster Sauce.—Beard the oysters (the number must depend on the quantity required), strain their liquor and let it stand for any sediment to fall, then pour it off clear into a saucepan, and add one blade of mace and two or three white peppercorns; let it boil for a few minutes, then throw in the oysters to let them just boil up; take them out and strain the liquor; boil the oysters and liquor again, adding some butter which has been rubbed in flour (on a trencher) and a little cream or milk.

Rye Bread.—Many cooks fancy that it is a great undertaking to make rye bread, and to have it good. Here are directions for making it, and if carefully followed the bread will be excellent: Take two cups of Indian meal; make in a thick batter with scalding water; when cold add a small cup of white bread sponge, a little sugar and salt, and teaspoonful of soda, dissolved. In this stir as much rye as is possible with a spoon; let it rise until it is very light, then work in with your hand as much rye as you can, but do not knead it, as that will make it hard; put it in buttered bread tins, and let it rise for about fifteen minutes, then bake for an hour and a half, cooling the oven gradually for the last twenty minutes.

Egg and Coffee.—There are various recipes for preparing and refining coffee; the following is the best that has ever come under our view, and is available in all places. Procure your coffee fresh roasted and not too brown, in the proportion of a quarter of a pound for three persons. Let it be Mocha, and grind it just before using. Put it in a basin, and break into it an egg, yolk, white, shell and all. Mix it up with a spoon to the consistency of mortar, place it with warm—not boiling—water in the coffee-pot, let it boil up and break three times, then stand a few minutes, and it will be as clear as amber, and the egg will give it a rich taste.

Bread Sauce. Boil half pint of milk and put into it a teacupful of bread crumbs, a little powdered, small chopped onion which has been boiled in three waters, and let it simmer twenty minutes, then add a bit of fresh butter rolled in flour; just boil up, and serve.

Family Pound Cake.—One pound of flour, dried; half pound of butter beat to a cream; half pound of pounded white sugar; half pound of currants, dried (these may of course be omitted, or caraways substituted, if preferred); four eggs; half a pint of milk. Bake it carefully.

Treacle Parkins.—One quart of oatmeal; three pounds of treacle; three quarters pound of sugar; a little butter and a little flour. Sweetmeat or caraways, ad libitum. Mix all together, then roll out thin and cut into round cakes. Bake on a tin.

Barley Water.—Wash a quarter pound of pearl barley, boil it up in a little water and pour the water off; add three pints of boiling soft water to the barley, and let it boil one hour and a half; strain and set aside for use; add to the barley about half the former quantity of water, and boil as before; strain, and when cold add to the former; it is flavored to the taste with any ingredient, or may be simply warmed with milk.

A Stuffed Loin of Mutton.—Take the skin of a loin of mutton with the flap on; bone it neatly; make a nice veal stuffing and fill the inside of the loin with it where the bones were removed; roll it up tight, skewer the flap, and tie twine round it to keep it firmly together; put the outside skin over it till nearly roasted, and then remove it that the mutton may brown. Serve with a nice gravy as for hare.

Sweetmeat Tarts.—Make a little short paste, roll it, and line your tins; prick them in the inside, and so bake them. When you serve them up, put in any sort of sweetmeats. You may have a different sort day by day, by keeping the shells ready baked by you.

A Desperate Case.—A traveler in the backwoods had lost his way, when he encountered a wild-eyed, haggard man who crawled out of a hollow log at his approach.

"I will pay you liberally to guide me to the cross-roads store, my friend," said the traveler.

"Stranger," answered the haggard man, "I wish you mighty well, but I wouldn't do it for eight hundred dollars!"

"What? Are you a fugitive from justice?"

"Yes!"

"A horsethief?"

"Worse than that."

"Good heavens! Are you a murderer?"

"Worse than that; at least, in the estimation of the community."

"What can be worse?"

"Well, you see, I thought I knew how to repair clocks, and gathered up all the timepieces in the neighborhood, expecting to make a small fortune regulating 'em. I got the whole twenty-eight apart, and then to save my life couldn't get 'em together again. And now I've got to stay hid out till an earthquake comes, or war is declared, or something happens to take the attention of the people away from my diabolical villainy."

All Alone.—His experiences during the Civil War were many, and formed the staple of his conversation not only when he had guests, but in the bosom of his family. As time went on his adventures grew in importance and magnitude, and there came to be a pronounced belief among his friends that his imaginative powers were becoming by no means impaired by advancing years.

Most appreciative of all his listeners was his youngest son, who night after night delighted to clamber upon his father's knee, with the never-varying request of "Papa, tell us some more about what you did in the war."

And he was always ready to tell the boy something more; and, as the narratives grew in number and the parental feats increased in valor, the boy grew wide-eyed and proud to think of the warrior-like qualities of his father, until one night, when the story was told, the child innocently said:

"But, daddy dear, couldn't you get anybody to help you put down that rebellion?"

The Genesis of Spite.—Animosities which do not rise to the dignity of passions evince themselves in spite. The most evil thing in spite is that it never even claims to be founded on a sort of wild justice.

It glories in its own willfulness, and luxuriates in venting a spleen for which no just cause exists. There is always hope for a day of high passion.

Even evil passions, if they are on a great scale, are generally closely related to noble passions, and often grow in the same soil.

But spite is the product of empty lives, and means vexations of a poor soil, a poor scale of living, and betokens a dwindling power both of love and hate.

What is wanted to sweep it away is any interest involving full employment for the higher energies. A multitude of small interests is not favorable to the growth of ardor of any kind; but, on the other hand, it is fatal to that worst result of brooding leisure—the small and yet deadly animosities springing up in minds weary of themselves and destitute of high interests, and which result in the spite that grows from a disposition to rail at its own surroundings.

The Law in France with Regard to Infants.—It is not generally known that in France it is forbidden, under severe penalties, for any one to give infants under one year any form of solid food, unless such be ordered by written prescription, signed by a legally qualified medical man. Nurses are also forbidden to use in the rearing of infants confided to their care, at any time or under any pretext whatever, any nursing bottle provided with a rubber tube.

The Conscript's Bride.

BY M. V.

RAMBLING about the French provinces a few years ago, I was powerfully interested in a young peasant girl named Eugenie, who, the townspeople informed me, was laboring under a mild but settled form of insanity.

She was very pale, except for a deep red spot at the top of her cheeks, that looked too much like the hectic of consumption not to excite sympathy. Her brilliant eyes, too, were preternaturally radiant, and her lips had a tremulous movement, as if she were talking with some invisible being. There was an intense, eager look, that seemed to speak of some absorbing interest, to which every event in life had been made to submit.

As I saw her each day carrying a bundle, which, from its nice arrangement, I concluded contained work, I fancied her struggling to maintain perhaps her parents, or at least some being dependent on her.

The haste, too, with which she walked, as if to reach home as soon as possible, made me imagine that she had some invalid there, to whom her presence was indispensable.

I often fancied her returning to one of those seven-story buildings in which people are so apt to congregate in France, and, climbing painfully the long stairs, to give the sunshine of her countenance to a younger brother or sister, or an aged father or mother.

The time which she took for her walks, however, deceived me. I was fancying her carrying home work at night, when she was in reality doing it in the morning—so that I had got her place of residence located in my mind just where it was not.

While I thought her in the large town, she was, in fact, in a very small suburb, and instead of living up a hundred feet high in the air, she was owner and proprietor of a tiny cottage on the banks of a river.

Instead of an invalid she had a powerful protector in the shape of a hale, hearty old uncle, who took admirable care of his little niece, now the sole remaining one of his family.

Here they might have lived comfortably, without the necessity of Eugenie's labor; but the girl had had, for years, a mission to perform that had taxed all her energies; and now that the necessity no longer existed, she was doing mechanically what had once been her pride and pleasure to perform.

Years before, when Eugenie Martel's father and mother died, her Uncle Auber came to be a father for the desolate little maiden.

He united his small property to hers, and helped her to increase her own income by the proper cultivation of her land, which he brought to yield tenfold what it had done in her father's time.

In this he was also assisted by a youth whom he had adopted into his affections from a boy, although the child had a father and mother living.

Passionately fond of children, old Auber had never been blessed with a family, and now that he had found, as he had said, both son and daughter, his happiness seemed complete.

The young people called each other cousin, to please the good old man; and, indeed, Joseph lived nearly the whole time with his adopted relatives, sharing with them the produce of their vintage.

Joseph's parents, unfortunately, did not love him as well as they did his younger brother, to whom they would have been glad to leave all their possessions.

They were even vexed to think that he would come home to sleep, and taunted him with the avarice of old Auber, who, they said, would not afford him a bed.

In vain Joseph replied that the little cottage contained but three small rooms, and that they positively had not space for themselves.

They persisted in deriding him, and, finally, he brought a tent to Eugenie's garden, making a bed within it of fresh, sweet hay, and sleeping there the entire summer.

"We shall commence gathering the grapes to-morrow, Joseph," said Auber, one pleasant evening, as he left him to retire to rest.

"There is a prospect of bright days for a week to come, and Eugenie is impatient to begin."

"I shall be ready," was the answer.

Whether the thought of his work kept the young man awake, or whether he was thinking too much of Eugenie, we know not; but his restlessness was so great that he rose at last, and walked out into the road to while away the time. Just as the grey dawn was breaking, a soldier on horseback met him.

"You are the very man I want," said the soldier, reining in his horse. "You have just been drawn as a conscript, and we march almost instantly. You will have time only to bid your friends good-bye, before we march.

No pen can paint Joseph's astonishment and grief; but even this was redoubled, when a young vine-dresser, whom he knew, took him aside, and disclosed to him the fact, that it was not he who had been drawn, but his brother, and that his father had contrived, by some deception, to substitute Joseph for Pierre.

"Are you sure?" he asked, breathlessly.

"Certain," was the reply. "I saw the name."

Joseph wept unrestrainedly. "I will go," he said. "They want me to go away so that Pierre can have my father's property, when all I want is his love. Very well; I will not thwart them.

"And look, Jacques, you must do me a favor. I cannot take leave of Eugenie and her uncle; but when I am gone, go and tell them why and wherefore I am missing this morning."

Jacques tried to change his resolution, by pointing out the injustice of the whole affair, but Joseph would hear nothing of it. Deep sadness, mingled with strong determination of purpose, was visible in his face, and he refused to permit Jacques to make any effort in his behalf.

"No, let Pierre stay with those who love him so much. They will not miss me," he added, bitterly, as he turned away to follow the sergeant to the place where he was to exchange his simple blouse for a military dress.

* * * * * *

The family at the cottage rose early. Eugenie prepared the breakfast. Bread, which if not white, was sweet and palatable, a basket of fresh grapes, with the night dew still lying upon their purple sides, and some delicate preparation of eggs, were placed on the nicely spread table, and Eugenie, in a light muslin dress, sat awaiting her uncle, who had gone to call Joseph, whom he thought to be quite a laggard, for the first morning of the vintage.

He returned soon, but alone, and wondering why he was absent, they sat down to the meal, and Auber went out to the garden as soon as it was over.

"Has he come, uncle?" the girl would call out occasionally, as she went round the house, performing all her little duties, and making it clear and fresh as a queen's palace, and fragrant with sweet herbs and flowers.

"Not yet," the old man answered many times, and then she saw him suddenly start as if a thought had struck him.

She watched him as he went peering into the thicket of vines, and again come forth, to look wistfully at the tiny pond, and she marked the look of deep anxiety that overspread his features.

Then she knew he was troubled about Joseph; and she went out and begged him to come in and rest. Just as she had succeeded in persuading him, for he was really unable to stand, they saw Jacques approaching.

"He is our Joseph's friend," whispered Eugenie, and she trembled without knowing why. She began to fear everything, and it was an absolute relief, after thinking of murder, suicide, and all terrible calamities, when Jacques told them the real truth.

It seemed a small thing to what she had imagined. But when she saw how her uncle was suffering, she began to realize all.

Then came the memory of the dear words that Joseph had spoken to her the night before—kind, brotherly words, it is true, but pointing to a love such as she had long felt for one who was so utterly disdained by unjust relatives.

Poor old Auber! Added to his distress about Joseph, he now had Eugenie sick with a fever upon his hands. He nursed her himself, although he had nearly all the harvesting to do. Words spoken in delirium told him how dear Joseph had become to his niece; and the old man's heart was almost broken by the thought that he could not bring back the wanderer, and that she might die without even beholding him again.

It was high noon, sultry and scorching; and the sick girl was panting for a breath of air. Indeed, Auber thought her dying. He could not resist making a single appeal which he thought might awaken her to the hope of life. He bent his head toward her, and whispered a few short but expressive sentences. The dull eye opened, brightened, even sparkled.

"His release!" she cried. "Uncle, how can I do that?"

"Oh, by getting well again," he replied. "We will cultivate our ground as much as it will bear, and the remainder you and I will earn. I will make wooden toys, and you shall take in embroidery and shell-work, taught you by the nuns."

Eugenie laid her hand upon her uncle's, and smiled a graceful, happy smile. From that time she grew better, and in a few weeks she sat up in the arbor which Joseph's hands had twined the vines over, her eyes fixed intently on embroidering a square yard of the finest cashmere. She was working for Joseph's discharge.

She did not neglect her newly regained health. On the contrary, she made every effort to preserve it; hoping to be the better able to earn that freedom which she knew Joseph would value more than life.

How well she succeeded may be told in a few words. The little sums that accrued from her labor, added to the uncle's extra hours upon a neighboring vineyard, at length reached an aggregate large enough to cover the purchase of Joseph's freedom from military service.

The amount, placed in a little bag, trembled in Eugenie's hand, and was transferred to her uncle, who again transmitted it to the proper authority.

Oh, what a weary, wearing time it was to wait! For want of occupation, she became worried and uneasy, and her uncle besought her with tears to go back to her work, lest the anxiety should again reduce her as before to perfect indolence and grief.

Poor Eugenie! She yielded, and she sat in the little cottage with piles of shells around her, trying to fashion them into delicate boxes and baskets, and choosing the prettiest for a box that should one day grace her wedding dressing-table, and hold her own and Joseph's little ornaments.

Meantime Joseph was not to know that Eugenie had furnished the money for his discharge; but to think that it had come from some unknown friend in the province.

And now the day arrives that is to see him return. Eugenie tries to calm down her agitated spirits, and goes about preparing a little feast for the occasion. Her table is set once more for three persons, and it is loaded with the simple dishes of which Joseph was once so fond, and crowned with flowers he planted. And then she sat down with Uncle Auber to watch his coming, her nervous little hands dropping the shells every moment.

"Put them away, dear," said the kindly old man, who was almost as nervous as herself; and she gathered them up with a smile, and began to arrange the flowers.

"How is this, dear uncle?" she said, with a slight paleness about her lips. "Here is a meadow saffron among my roses and lilies!"

"Ah, how did that happen?" said Auber. "Well, never mind, love, the flower does not speak truth this morning."

"I cannot tell, uncle," she said, absently. "Perhaps, indeed, 'my best days are gone,' as the flower says."

Uncle Auber turned from her to the window, to hide the tear that started—for he, too, drew an omen from the flower; and in so doing, he espied a speck in the distance, which on coming nearer, took the semblance of figures walking.

There were two. One, the tallest, looked like Joseph, and soon he saw that it was, indeed, his adopted son. The other was a woman.

He did not dare to tell Eugenie that he was coming; for he heard her quick breathing and knew how excited she would become. It would be better, he thought, for her not to watch the approach.

At last, he could keep it no longer. He rushed out to the garden through which they must come, and Eugenie followed, like one in a dream. The soldier sprang forward and clasped both in one embrace, then turning, he drew another toward him while Eugenie lay trembling on his arm, and said simply, "Uncle and Cousin Eugenie, this is my wife!"

* * * * * *

In the cottage, tended faithfully by Auber, who is both father and mother to the poor girl now, Eugenie sits, folding up imaginary work, while each morning she goes out to carry it. A napkin or a handkerchief, and a few shells, frequently comprise its contents, although she believes them to be rich embroidery and finished boxes, which she is to take out for sale.

Ask her for whom she is thus working, and she will tell you, with a slight blush on her pale cheeks, that she has a friend in the army for whom she is hoping to earn enough to purchase his discharge from service.

Thus far had I written out the life of poor Eugenie. Lovers of fiction may think I am about to spoil all the romance which belongs to my story; but benevolent, matter-of fact readers will rejoice when I tell them that a letter from Uncle Auber, received by a friend in Paris, tells us that Joseph's German wife died last year, and that a new happiness has driven the paleness from Eugenie's cheek, and the heavy cloud from her life.

A BAD SHOT.—A French landed proprietor and a colonel of dragoons had a deadly quarrel; blood only could wash out the insults that had passed between them.

Both men were eccentric to a degree, and they agreed that lots should be drawn, and that the loser should at once proceed to some retired spot and shoot himself.

The next morning the opponents and their seconds met at a small cafe outside the town. Lots were duly drawn, the landed proprietor proving the winner.

The colonel took his bad fortune calmly; he wrote a few lines upon a piece of paper, which he handed to his second, took an affectionate farewell of all, and forgave his more fortunate adversary as a Christian gentleman ought to do.

He then, accepting the loaded pistol, moved steadily into an adjoining room and closed the door. The others remained breathlessly awaiting the detonation which was to convey to them the finale of the tragedy.

At last it came. Eagerly they ran to the door of the fatal chamber, when it was thrown open, and the supposed defunct stood on the threshold grasping the smoking weapon.

"Heavens, gentlemen," exclaimed he, with a bland smile, "is it not unfortunate? I have missed myself!"

A SELL.—A neat "sell" is described in Mr. Barnum's autobiography. He was staying at a certain hotel, when one of the group of men who were chatting together proposed that they should have a race to a fence some hundred yards away, and that the last man who touched it should undergo a penalty not wholly unconnected with the purchase of champagne.

Barnum declared that he could not run, he carried too much weight, and was not in training; but a much more ponderous old gentleman declared that he would try, and Barnum therefore consented also, thinking that at any rate he could beat the "nineteen stunner."

They made a fair start, and Barnum was astonished to find himself leading, in spite of weight and bad condition. He continued to make play a length ahead, and suddenly the peculiarity of the fact that he should be beating young and active men flashed upon him.

There must, he felt, be a trick somewhere; so, on reaching the rail, instead of touching it, he turned round and watched his various rivals in the race. No one else, however, touched the rail, and then the wily showman saw through the catch.

If he had touched it, he would have been "the last man" to do so, as none of the rest would have put a hand upon it on any account.

DARK HOURS.—There are dark hours; dark hours, that mark the history of the brightest year. For not a whole month in any of the thousand of the past, perhaps, has the sun shone brilliantly all the time. And there have been cold and stormy days in every year.

And yet the mists and shadows of the darkest hours were dissipated, and flitted heedlessly away. The cruelest of the ice fetters have been broken and dissolved, and the most furious storm loses its power to alarm.

And what a parable is all this of human fear of our inside world, where the heart works at its destined labor! Here, too, we have the overshadowing of dark hours, and many a cold blast chills the heart to its core.

But what matters it? Man is born a hero, and it is only by darkness and storms that heroism gains its greatest and best development and illustration: then it kindles the black cloud into a blaze of glory, and the storm bears it rapidly to its destiny. Despair not, then.

Disappointment will be realized. Mortifying failure may attend this effort, and that one; but only be honest and struggle on, and it will all work well.

Humorous.

JUST ROOM

We sat on the stair—
  There was just room for two.
We were not aware,
As we sat on the stair,
That mamma was there;
  Right there in full view,
She sat—on the stare.
  There was just room for two.

What part of speech is kissing?—A conjunction.

A horse it is said chews tobacco. We have often seen a fast-driven horse smoke.

"He said I was sweet as sugar," said Maude.

"Powdered?" queried Mabel.

Someone who believes that "brevity is the soul of wit" writes, "Don't eat stale Q-cumbers. They'll W up."

The chamois skin and the sponge agreed to drown themselves, but when they got in the river the sponge took water.

There is never any difficulty in finding people to play first fiddle; but, oh, how hard it is to get the rest of the orchestra!

If a cheerful heart is a continual feast, there must be a large number of people who do not get a square meal once a year.

We sneer at the Siamese for worshipping the elephant; but think of the money that is paid here annually just to see it!

Although it commenced to storm the camp-meeting preacher continued his sermon and when he had finished the thunder clapped.

Father, wishing to impress the lesson: Now, my son, tell me why I punished you.

Son, sobbing: That's it—you've flogged me, an' now you don't know what you done it for!

Mrs. Wigwag: I can never keep that coat of yours on the rack. It is always falling down.

Mr. Wigwag: Well, it's a fall coat.

"This is a hard world," murmured the young man.

"Yes," replied she, "one doesn't realize how hard it is till one falls off a bicycle once or twice a week."

"I have one request to make," said the pretty type-writer, when she had accepted her employer's proposal of marriage.

"Name it, my love."

"Let me select my successor at the desk."

Fogg: The train at the time was going sixty miles an hour. I was brushed off by a porter.

Fenderson: Were you injured?

Fogg: To the amount of a quarter.

Mother: When the boy in the other house threw stones at you, why didn't you come and tell me?

Bobby: Because, mamma, I can throw them back better than you. He's more likely to get hit.

Stout man, whose appetite has been the envy of his fellow boarder: I declare, I have three buttons off my vest.

Mistress of the house, who has been aching to give him a hint: You will probably find them in the dining-room, sir.

Distressed young mother with crying baby in railway-car: Dear, dear, I'm sure I don't know what to do with this child!

Kind and thoughtful bachelor, who is seated on the opposite seat: Shall I open the window for you, madam?

"I don't believe whippings do children any good," said Mrs. Wiggins. "Why, I whipped Johnny at the photographer's three times because he wouldn't look pleasant, and he still looked as cross and disagreeable as ever."

Friend: Why do you write 'dictated' at the top of each of your letters? You have no amanuensis or type-writer.

Business-man: No; but I'm a mighty poor speller, and, if there are any mistakes in my letters, the recipient will lay the blame on the stenographer!

"I'm very glad to have been of any comfort to your poor husband, my good woman. But what made you send for me, instead of your own minister?"

"Well, sir, it's typhus my poor husband's got, and we didna think it is just richt for our ain dear minister to run the risk.

"How do you like your new cook?"

"Pretty well. She is not too clean, cooks badly, and breaks everything that comes under her hand. But she has one good quality—a very uncommon one nowadays."

"What is that?"

"Why, she'll stay!"

Fond father: If that boy of mine has any particular bent I can't find it.

Philosopher: What experiments have you made to find out?

Fond father: Very thorough ones. I gave him a toy printing press, a steam engine, a box of paints, a chest of tools, and a lot of other things carefully selected to find out whether his tastes were literary, mechanical, artistic, commercial, or what, and I know no more than I did before.

Philosopher: What did he do with them?

Fond father: Smashed them all up.

Philosopher: Ah, I see! He is to be a furniture mover.

BETWIXT DARK AND DAYLIGHT.

"Between the dark and the daylight" seems to bring up before the mind's eye that hour, so uneasy to many a weak invalid, that ushers in the early day.

This is all too often a creepy-creepy, uncanny kind of an hour to a convalescent. She may have slept fairly well in the fore part of the night; but she has awakened far, far too soon. The window-blinds are still down, and the grey dawn is beginning to creep through them. There is no other light in the room, for the night-light has long since gone sputtering out, so hardly anything is visible.

It is cold too, and cheerless. And what a long time it will be before the servants stir and someone comes in with the morning cup of tea or chocolate. Slumber still seals every eye in the house, and she would not dream of depriving anyone of her rest. That would be selfish, she thinks. So will lie and count the weary minutes till grandfather's clock on the staircase grunts out the hour of night.

How she wishes she could only get off to sleep again! She tries and tries, on this side and on that; but all in vain. The very pillow has hardened its heart against her, and the attempt to sleep only sets her brain on fire and whirls her from one disagreeable train of thought to another.

Happy birds begin to sing—if she is a dweller in the quiet, green country—sparrows bicker, cocks crow in the distance, and every sound near or afar tells that God's world is awakening to the joy and gladness of another day.

But she— "Oh, dear! oh, dear!" she says, half aloud. "Will it never, never be morning?"

Now, reader, if this paper of mine does no other good save that of giving a few hints to the convalescent or the weakly, who awake between the dark and the daylight, it will not, I think, be written in vain.

Sleep, you must know, is essential to all of us; but it is life itself to the invalid. The strong can do with probably only five hours, if the work of the day has been performed out of doors. We should also remember that some people can sleep more in three hours than others can in ten, and seven hours of genuine slumber does anyone more good than a dozen if the sleep be indifferent and disturbed by wearying dreams. You see, one cannot sleep healthfully unless blood almost completely departs from the brain, leaving no more in the millions of tiny, hair-like branching blood-vessels, than is sufficient to carry on a species of organic life.

The most perfect form of sleep we are acquainted with in Nature is probably that into which the trees fall during the winter. Yonder, for example, is a great sycamore nod-nodding in the breeze just outside my wigwam window while I write. It is leafless and bare and unconscious. When summer winds rustled its bonnie branches, and summer sunshine glittered on every leaf, that tree was conscious of a feeling of gentle warmth if nothing else, and had anyone lopped a limb from it, though incapable of feeling pain, the wound would at least have felt cold.

But now the tree is wrapped in deepest slumber. It seems dead and yet it is alive, and already budlets are beginning to shoot out on every twig. That is a healthy tree, and its sleep is natural. By-and-by the sap will return, and it will once more awaken.

I have told you of the tiny blood-vessels of the brain. They are elastic as to their walls, and small though they be, they are supplied by nerves still smaller.

Note this now: If the tone of the body and nerves is well kept up; if the heart is strong enough on both sides; if sufficient open-air exercise is taken every day; if sufficient food and no more is taken, and if the mind is easy and free from the effects of excitement, then bad sleep is a sheer impossibility.

But during illness of some kinds, and especially during convalescence, the body is weak, and the nerves which incite the contraction of those tiny blood-vessels, and are thus the motor force which compels the expulsion of the blood, have greatly lost their power, and so sleep at its best is bad, and therefore fitful.

At that hour of the morning then, between the dark and the daylight, the body is at its weakest, the heart at its feeblest point. It is ebb-tide, and at this time the lamp of life is more apt to flicker and go out than at any other period of the day or night.

And now I stand face to face with the question, how is the fitful sleep of the invalid or convalescent to be rendered more healthful, and that weary early waking prevented? Manifestly by strengthening the muscles and nerves, and so restoring the balance of nature.

Besides, while drugs that tend to tone the body and elevate the constitution do much good when skilfully administered, narcotics or sleeping draughts are as a rule worse than useless.

Your mainstay is food.

Food that can be easily digested. Food before going to sleep. But above all, food that can be taken early in the morning between the dark and the daylight.

This enables the convalescent to get a firmer hold of life; it tones the nerves and restores resiliency to the brain capillaries.

The food that is tasty is more likely to digest, because it excites the flow of the salivary glands. Contrary to the generally received opinion, a morsel of cheese is sometimes eminently digestible on this very account.

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MRS. EDMONDSON GORTER.
Oak Lodge Thorpe,
Nov., 20, '85. Norwich, Norfolk, England.

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The Crown is the only Piano which contains the Wonderful Orchestral Attachment and Practice Clavier, the greatest invention of the age and by the use of which you can imitate perfectly the Harp, Zither, Banjo, Mandolin, Guitar, Clavicord, Dulcimer, Spinet, Harpsichord, Music Box, Autoharp, Bag Pipe, Etc.

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Reading Railroad.

Anthracite Coal. No Smoke. No Cinder

On and after May 17, 1896.

Trains Leave Reading Terminal, Philada.

Buffalo Day Express, Parlor and Dining Car, Black Diamond Express, For Buffalo, (Parlor Car)	daily 8.00 a m Week-days, 12.30 p m	4 00 p m 4 00 p m
Buffalo and Chicago Exp. Sleeping Cars,	daily, 9.45 p m	5 15 p m

Williamsport Express, week-days, 8.35, 10.05 a m, 4.05 p m. Daily (Sleeper) 11.30 p m.

Lock Haven, Clearfield and Bellefonte Express (Sleeper) daily, except Saturday, 11.30 p m.

FOR NEW YORK.

Leave Reading Terminal, 6.10, 7.30, (two-hour train), 8.30, 9.30, 10.30, 11.00 a m, 12.45, (dining car), 1.30, 3.05, 4.00, 4.02, 5.10, 6.10, 7.30, 8.30 (dining car) p m, 12.10 night. Sundays—7.10, 8.30, 9.30, 10.10, 11.50 (dining car) a m, 1.30, 3.55, 6.10, 8.10 (dining car) p m, 12.1 night.

Leave 24th and Chestnut Sts., 3.35, 7.52, 10.09, 10.32, 11.04, a m, 12.57 (Dining car), 3.08, 4.10, 6.12, 8.19 (dining car), 11.45 p m. Sunday 3.55, 10.32, a m, 12.14, (dining car), 4.10, 6.12, 8.19, (dining car), 11.45 p m.

Leave New York, foot of Liberty street, 4.30, 8.00, 8.15 9.00, 10.00, 11.30 a m, 1.30, 2.00, 3.30, 4.00 (two-hour train), 4.30 (two-hour train), 6.00, 6.00, 7.30, 9.00, 10.00 p m, 12.15 night. Sundays—4.30 9.00, 10.00, 11.30, a m, 2.00, 4.00, 5.00, 6.00 p m, 12.15 night.

Parlor cars on all day express trains and sleeping cars on all night trains to and from New York.

FOR BETHLEHEM, EASTON AND POINTS IN LEHIGH AND WYOMING VALLEYS, 4.05, 8.00, 9.00, 11.30 a m, 12.30, 2.00, 4.30, 5.30, 6.14, 9.45 p m. Sundays—6.24, 8.32, 9.00 a m, 1.10, 4.30, 6.14, 9.45 p m. (9.45 p m, does not connect for Easton on Sunday.)

FOR SCHUYLKILL VALLEY POINTS.

For Phœnixville and Pottstown—Express, 8.35, 10.05 a m, 12.45, (Saturdays only 2.30), 4.05, 6.30, 10.30 p m. Accom., 4.20, 7.45, 11.08 a m, 1.42, 4.35, 5.54, 7.20 p m. Sundays—Express, 4.00, 9.05 a m, 11.30 p m. Accom., 7.30, 11.35 a m, 6.15, p m.

For Reading—Express, 8.35, 10.05 a m, 12.45, (Saturdays only 2.30), 4.05, 6.30, 11.30 p m. Accom., 4.20, 7.45 a m, 1.42, 4.35, 5.53, 7.20 p m. Sunday—Express 4.00, 9.05 a m, 11.30 p m. Accom., 7.30 a m, 6.15 p m.

For Lebanon and Harrisburg—Express, 8.35, 10.05 a m, (Saturdays only 2.30), 4.05, 6.30 p m. Accom., 4.20 a m, 1.42, 7.20 p m. Sunday—Express, 4.00, 7.30 a m. Accom., 6.15.

For Pottsville—Express, 8.35, 10.05 a m, Saturdays only 2.30, 4.05, 6.30, 11.30 p m. Accom., 4.20, 7.45 a m, 1.42 p m. Sunday—Express, 4.00, 9.05 a m, 11.30 p m. Accom 6.30 p m.

For Shamokin and Williamsport—Express, 8.35, 10.05 a m, 4.05 11.30 p m. Sunday—Express, 9.05 a m, 11.30 p m. Additional for Shamokin—Express, week-days, 6.30 p m. Accom., 4.20 a m. Sundays—Express, 4.00 a m.

For Danville and Bloomsburg, 10.05 a m.

FOR ATLANTIC CITY.

Leave Chestnut Street and South Street Wharves: Week-days—Express, 9.00, a m, 2.00, (Saturdays only 3.00), 4.00, 5.00, p m. Accommodation, 8.00 a m, 4.30, 5.30 p m. Sundays—Express, 9.00, 10.00 a m. Accommodation, 8.00 a m, 4.45 p m.

Leave Atlantic City depot—Week-days—Express, 7.30, 9.00 a m, 3.30, 5.30 p m. Accommodation, 6.50, 8.15 a m, 4.31 p m. Sundays—Express, 4.00, 5.00, 5.00 p m. Accommodation, 7.15 a m, 4.15 p m.

Parlor Cars on all express trains.

Brigantine, week-days, 8.00 a m, 4.30 p m.

Lakewood, week-days, 8.00 a m, 4.15 p m.

FOR CAPE MAY.

Week-days, 8.15 a m, 4.15 p m. Sundays, 9.15 a m.

Leave Cape May, week-days, 7.35 a m, 3.40 p m. Sundays, 5.40 p m.

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Boats from Arch and South Sts. Wharves, direct to the Park, every 15 minutes from 9 A. M until 10 P. M. Boats from Otis Street Wharf, Kensington, daily, at 10 A. M., 12 noon, 2, 4, 6 and 8 P. M.

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